

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA

Statement of Rights & Obligations

of Electricity Consumers

Version 1.0

This statement is published in pursuant to Section 3(1)(e) of Sri Lanka Electricity Act, No. 20 of 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

Section 3 (1) (e) of Sri Lanka Electricity Act 2009 requires the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (Commission) to publish a statement outlining the Consumer rights and obligations. Main objectives of publishing this statement are to create an awareness among the consumers of their rights which is vital for consumer protection, make them aware of the levels of the quality of service Licensee is expected to provide and also to educate the consumers of their obligations, fulfillment of which will be an essential requirement for the provision of an efficient electricity service.

It is expected that this document will serve as a pledge of commitment and trust among the three main stakeholders of the industry, the Consumers, Commission and the Licensees and also will lay a solid foundation to enable the licensee and the commission to provide the best possible service to the consumers.

2. CONSUMER RIGHTS

2.1 ACCESS RELIABLE AND SAFE ELECTRIC POWER COMMENSURATE WITH THE QUALITY STANDARDS LICENSEE HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE.

Minimum levels of quality of electricity supply at the point of supply are specified in the 'Safety & Supply Standards and Performance Standards Regulations' issued by the Hon. Minister of Power and Energy. These are available in our website (www.pucsl.gov.lk) or hard copies can be obtained from the GOSL Publication Bureau.

Consumer has a right to:

1. receive the electricity supply services as per such standards prescribed by the aforementioned Regulation; and
2. be compensated as per such Regulations if the licensee fails to meet the prescribed standards

2.2 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON MATTERS RELATED TO ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SERVICE

Commission has approved codes of practices related to the procedures governing the provision of new service connections, service standards, meter reading, billing procedures, service charges, price structure, complaint procedures, disconnection and termination of service and pay points.

Licensee is required to comply with such instructions and accordingly consumers have the following basic rights in respect of these activities

2.2.1 NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS, CHANGE OF SERVICE CAPACITY/TARIFF CATEGORY

Consumer has a right to

1. receive the supply of electricity (upon request), if:
 - a. his/her premises is located within fifty (50) meters from any distribution line;
 - b. the premises could be connected to any distribution line by an electric line supplied and laid (within the premises) by the consumer;
 - c. he/she has settled all dues in respect of electricity supply services he/she has obtained previously, from the licensee;
 - d. the connecting and supplying electricity to his/her premises would not result in the licensee being in breach of any statutory requirement; and
 - e. he/she provides the security for the payment of all moneys which may become due to the licensee, as may be noticed by the licensee
2. be informed of all the requirements which have to be satisfied by a person, in order to obtain the supply of electricity.
3. receive application form(s) free of cost and/or to download the electronic versions of the application form.
4. be assisted in filling the application forms, via telephone, email or at Licensee's offices.
5. submit the application form electronically or otherwise to the licensee with the relevant registration fee, as approved by the Commission.
6. know the charges and its breakup, the applicant/consumer has to pay to obtain the electricity supply services.
7. receive interest on such some of money provided to the licensee as security deposits, at a rate approved by the Commission, for the time period it remains in the hands of the licensee.
8. receive a receipt for the payments made to the Licensee.
9. upon submitting a request for supply of electricity, receive a notice from the distribution licensee, specifying:
 - a. the extent to which his/her proposals relating to the electricity supply connection are acceptable to the distribution licensee and any counter proposals of the distribution licensee;
 - b. the tariff payable;
 - c. the amounts payable to the licensee which are reasonably incurred in giving the supply;
 - d. the required security deposits (if any); and
 - e. other terms & conditions which the he/she may be required to accept, upon submitting a request for supply.
10. know the status of their application and information about the reasons of non-disposal or rejection thereof, personal hearing, appeal and removal of deficiencies;
11. receive prior intimation regarding the visit/entry into their premises by an authorized representative of the Licensee in their area of supply

12. demand proof of identity from such representatives of the Licensee visiting their premises
13. receive electrical supply connection within the time provided in the 'Safety & Supply Standards and Performance Standards Regulations' after: following the specified procedure; resolution of any matters which are beyond the control of the licensee; and on payment of applicable fees/charges.

2.2.2 DISCONNECTION AND TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

i) Disconnection with the agreement of both parties

Consumer has a right to

1. request for a disconnection of the electricity supply to his premises at any time, after settling all his dues and giving advance notice as stated in the Supply Services Code;
2. request the licensee to set-off the dues against the security deposit and the interest accrued, which licensee shall be required to comply with;
3. receive all outstanding dues from the Licensee including the balance security deposit and the interest accrued and to get the supply disconnected at a pre-arranged time.

ii) Disconnection due to violation of contractual terms by the consumer

Consumer has a right

1. to receive minimum ten (10) days of written notice, prior to the disconnection:
 - a) demanding him/her to pay the charges due in respect of the supply of electricity, provision of any electricity meter, electric line or electrical plant for the purposes of that supply;
 - b) for failing to allow access to the meter for taking meter readings or testing, for three (3) consecutive occasions;
 - c) for failing to provide a security deposit if and when requested to do so; or
 - d) for failing to allow access to the meter for inspections.
2. to not to be disconnected the supply of electricity:
 - a) if a complaint has been received (which is yet to be resolved) directly related to the reason for disconnection as stated in the disconnection notice; and
 - b) if the reconnection can not be carried out within twenty four (24) hours upon settlement of all amounts due and if the facilities for the payments are not available on the proposed date of disconnection.

Except, in cases where the consumer's installation poses a danger to the health or safety of his or other consumers/public or licensee's employees, and also

where the consumer is engaged in illegal use of electricity under the applicable rules and regulations.

2.2.3 RECONNECTIONS

Consumer disconnected for failing to meet his obligations has a right to request for a reconnection after:

1. he/she has made good the default;
2. has paid the reasonable expenses of disconnecting and reconnecting the supply; and
3. has provided required security, if any

On a request made after satisfying the above requirements, the licensee shall be required to reconnect the supply within one (1) working day.

2.2.4 COMPLAINT HANDLING

If ever a consumer finds that the services provided by the licensee are less than satisfactory, consumer has the right to have their grievances redressed in accordance with the complaint handling procedure given in the Supply Services Code and [Dispute Resolution Rules].

Consumer also has the right to

1. purchase a copy of the latest version of the complaint handling procedure from any of the consumer service centres and the licensee's area/branch offices
2. receive a copy at the time of entering into an agreement for a new connection with the licensee
3. access the latest version of the complaint handling procedure through the Licensee's website
4. seek assistance from the licensee for any clarifications

2.2.5 METERS, METER READING AND BILLING PROCEDURES

Consumer has the right to

1. know the types of meters licensee could make available to the consumer viz pre payment, manually read or electronically read meters and the options available
2. know the meter reading procedures adopted by the licensee; viz monthly or once in two months, estimation etc.
3. know the estimated date of the next meter reading
4. to get the meter tested for accuracy upon making a request to the Licensee and upon payment of testing charges. Besides the testing facility of the Licensee, consumers have the right to get the meter tested upon payment of relevant charges (testing charges, licensee's charges and the charges of the Commission), in the presence of a licensee's representative, at such accredited laboratory as may be approved by the Commission.

5. to receive a copy of the meter test report, which in any case should be provided within two weeks from the date of request for testing.
6. receive a refund for the over payment from the day the request have been made to test the meter and also the payment made for the testing, if the test proves the meter is faulty.

2.2.6 ELECTRICITY BILLS

Consumers' have a right to receive accurate, timely and a clear bill with all basic billing information. Accordingly the Licensee shall be required to ensure that the bill presented shall include:

1. the energy consumption, maximum demand (where applicable) and the amount due for the period for which bill is presented and the date before which the payment has to be made
2. basis for the computation of the bill i.e. generation charges, transmission charges, distribution charges, taxes, subsidies and any other charges per unit
3. the date of last meter reading
4. the estimated date of the next meter reading – the actual date can be three (3) days prior of after the estimated date
5. telephone number for breakdowns/emergencies
6. telephone number/address/email/fax of person to be contacted in case of any questions on the bill, to obtain a duplicate in case of a loss of the original bill or for not receiving the bill on the due date

2.2.7 SERVICE CHARGES, PRICE STRUCTURE, AND BILL PAYMENT

Consumer has a right to

1. know the prevailing Tariff Schedule and the list of other charges [Schedule of Charges] levied by the Licensee, which the Licensees shall publish in widely circulated English, Sinhala and Tamil daily/weekend news papers, annually, and as and when any revisions are made.
2. request/obtain from the Licensee all the relevant information required in understanding the Tariff Schedule/other charges and to obtain from the Licensee any clarifications on the method of calculating his/her monthly bill.
3. know the addresses of the Bill Payment centres
4. make the payments by cash/cheque/credit card at the authorized bill payment centres (where facilities are available) and also through the licensee's web site.

2.3 ENTRY INTO THE CONSUMERS' PREMISES

Any officer authorized by a distribution licensee, may enter into consumer's premises for the purposes of:

1. (i) inspecting and maintaining any electric line or plant belonging to or operated by the distribution licensee; or

- (ii) ascertaining the register of any electricity meter and in the case of a prepayment meter, removing any money or tokens belonging to or operated by the distribution licensee;
2. removing, inspecting or reinstalling any electric meter or installing any substitute meter or associated equipment.
3. discontinuing the supply of electricity or removing the electricity meter, where a consumer intentionally or negligently damages or causes to be damaged, any electric plant, line or domestic electricity supply equipment belonging to or operated by a licensee.
4. disconnecting the supply or removing any electrical plant, line or meter, where:
 - (i) a distribution licensee is authorized to do so under any provision of or of regulations made under the Sri Lanka Electricity Act, No.20 of 2009;
 - (ii) a consumer ceases to require the supply of electricity;
 - (iii) a person entering into occupy a premises previously supplied with electricity does not require a supply of electricity; or
 - (iv) a person entering into occupy a premises previously supplied with electricity through a meter belonging to or operated by a distribution licensee, does not borrow/hire that meter.
5. placing a new electric line or new electrical plant in place of, or in addition to, any existing line or plant which has already been lawfully placed, or repairing or altering any such existing line or plant

However, any officer authorized by a distribution licensee shall not enter into a consumer's premises for the purposes contained in item 1 above, if the consumer has applied for disconnection from the supply of electricity and the licensee has failed to do so within a reasonable time.

Consumer has a right to:

1. receive at least three (3) days prior notice on visit(s) by an electrical inspector or any officer authorized by a licensee, unless the purpose of the visit is to attend to an emergency fault in any electric line or plant.
2. demand to produce identity/authority from such representatives of the licensee visiting the premises
3. be reasonably compensated for any disturbance, disability or damage that may be caused pursuant to the entry

2.4 CONSUMER EDUCATION

Consumer has a right to:

1. inspect, read and seek clarification on 'Electricity Consumers' Statement of Rights & Obligations', 'Regulations for Safety & Supply Standards and Performance Standards', 'Supply Services Code', 'Schedule of Tariffs & Charges' and Terms &

- Conditions of Supply (in all three languages), as revised from time to time, which shall be made available during normal working hours (9:00 am to 4:00 pm) at all consumer service centres and the licensee's area/branch offices;
2. obtain copies of the documents mentioned above from any of the offices of the licensee on payment of a charge as approved by the Commission or to download the same from the licensee's or Commission's website;
 3. receive a copy of 'Electricity Consumers' Statement of Rights & Obligations' and 'Schedule of Tariffs & Charges' at the time consumer enters into an agreement with the licensee for a new supply connection;
 4. receive advise on general energy saving measures and typical energy consumption figures for household appliances from the Licensees, the Sustainable Energy Authority; and
 5. receive advice on general safety aspects when using electricity from the Licensee

2.5 EQUALITY OF TREATMENT

Consumer has the right to demand the Licensees that he/she be treated equally to other similar customers, free of prejudice or disadvantage.

2.6 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Consumer has the right to demand that the personal information that has been provided to the Licensee or any other information with regard to his electricity supply shall not be disclosed to any other party without the consent of the consumer, unless such information has been requested by the Commission or judiciary.

3. CONSUMER OBLIGATIONS

Consumers shall:

- (a) pay all amounts legitimately billed by the Licensee in a timely manner as per the provisions contained in the Supply Services Code/Tariff Agreement. Non payment within the stipulated time period may result in discontinuation of the electricity supply;
- (b) cooperate fully with the efforts of the Licensee in conserving electricity and adhere with any guidelines issued/support programs implemented by the Licensee, the Commission, Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority or the Ministry of Power & Energy on efficient use of electricity, to the furthest extent possible;
- (c) cooperate with the authorized officer(s) of the Licensee who legitimately visit his premises, and shall make the premises available to them for carrying out their duties to enable Licensee to provide a better service;
- (d) provide a security deposit for the amounts to be paid in providing a connection for supply of electricity, if required by the Licensee, as per the provisions contained in the Supply Services Code;
- (e) disclose all the relevant information to the Licensee when applying for a connection for the supply of electricity and no mistake shall be made with the information on the purpose for which electricity is to be used;
- (f) observe and adhere to the terms & conditions of the Tariff Agreement entered into with the Licensee;
- (g) allow the record of consumption to be reflected in the appropriate metering device faithfully and accurately, without any interferences;
- (h) use electricity safely and only for the purposes as per the contracted terms and tariff category, and ensure not to use electricity via illegal connections, meter tampering or any other device that interferes with normal connections;
- (i) not use electricity in a way that causes interference or damage to licensee's distribution systems or other consumers;
- (j) inform the licensee if any changes are to be done in the wiring or plan to add any new equipment that may affect the required capacity, quality or safety of the electricity supply.
- (k) refrain from allowing electricity supplied to a premises, be used at any another address or supply electricity to any other person unless the licensee has granted permission.
- (l) not use electricity supplied to be used under one tariff for a different purpose.
- (m) not allow any person other than the licensee, to restore the supply of electricity, where such supply of electricity to his/her premises was disconnected by the licensee.
- (n) ensure the security of electricity lines, electricity plants or equipment installed at the premises, used for the purpose of supplying electricity to his/her premises
- (o) settle all amounts due and inform the licensee well in advance, before leaving the premises or change of ownership of the premises
- (p) not build structures or plant trees which might:

- a. obstruct or interfere with the installation, maintenance or working of electric lines or plants; or
- b. constitute an unacceptable source of danger to general public, specially the children

4. KEY CONTACTS

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This statement of 'Electricity Consumers' Rights & Obligations' was prepared in terms of the Section 3 (1) (e) of the Sri Lanka Electricity Act, No. 20 of 2009 and approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka on 17th July 2009.

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