



PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF SRI LANKA

Guidelines on Shifting/Removing of Electric Pole(s)/Line(s) in Public Roads

Version – 1.0

May 2026

BLANK

GUIDELINES ON SHIFTING/REMOVING OF ELECTRIC POLE(S)/LINE(S) IN PUBLIC ROADS

Introduction

Schedule II paragraph 1(1)(a) of the Sri Lanka Electricity Act No.36 of 2024 (as amended) (“SLEA”) permits a Distribution Licensee for the purpose of carrying out its activities within its Authorized Area, to install under, over, in, on, along or across any street any electric lines or electrical plant and any structures for housing or covering any such lines or plant and where necessary inspect, maintain, adjust, repair, alter, replace or remove any such plant or lines. Although there is no express provision for shifting therein, same could be construed as coming within the term “alteration” (of location) of electric lines or electrical plants.

From time to time due to varied reasons particularly to facilitate infrastructure and other development, the need arises to shift/remove electric lines/poles. Although there are guidelines for shifting/removing electric lines/poles from private lands/roads there are no guidelines for the same in relation to public roads. As such, these Guidelines have been drafted further to a study conducted on the prevalent laws, regulations, codes and methodologies, and a report submitted to the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (“PUCSL”) on the same, and shall act as guidance in shifting/removing electric lines/poles in public roads.

Objective

The objective of these Guidelines is to provide a consistent, efficacious and participatory procedure for shifting/removing electric lines/poles in public roads which reflects international best practices and seeks to balance the rights of the Distribution Licensees, Local Authorities/other relevant authorities and members of the public.

Scope

Where a request or requirement has arisen for shifting/removing of electric line(s)/pole(s) these Guidelines shall be followed and adhered to, to the fullest extent possible in carrying out the same.

Applicability

These Guidelines are applicable to the Distribution Licensees (“DL”) (Electricity Distribution Lanka Pvt. Ltd, and Lanka Electricity Company (Pvt) Ltd), the PUCSL, Local Authorities, other relevant authorities (Road Development Authority (“RDA”), Provincial Road Development Authorities (“PRDA”) and Provincial Road Development Departments (“PRDD”), members of the public and any other party concerned in the process of shifting/removing of electric line(s)/pole(s) in public roads.

Interpretation

In these Guidelines, the following terms/abbreviations shall bear the meanings corresponding to such term/abbreviation as set out in the table below.

Term/Abbreviation	Meaning
Appropriate Authority	The Local Authority or other relevant authority to which the road where electric line(s)/pole(s) is/are situate, belongs
Authorized Area	An area designated in the license granted to DLs wherein the DL is authorized to distribute and supply or distribute or supply electricity
EDL	Electricity Distribution Lanka Pvt. Ltd
Detailed Cost Estimate	Comprehensive cost estimate for shifting/removing electric line(s)/pole(s) prepared by the DL which <i>inter alia</i> includes labour charges (which shall also cover labour supervision costs), non-recoverable material costs, transport charges (including both persons and material/equipment transportation) and overhead cost etc.
DL	Distribution Licensee being a person who has been granted distribution license(s) by the PUCSL .
Electric Line	any line whether underground or over ground which is used for carrying electricity for any purpose and includes, unless the context otherwise requires- (a) any support for any such line, including but not limited to, any structure, pole or other thing in, on, by or from which any such line is or may be supported, carried or suspended; (b) any apparatus connected to any such line for the purpose of carrying electricity; and (c) any wire, cable, tube, pipe or other similar thing (including its casing, insulator or coating) which surrounds or supports or is surrounded or supported by or is installed in close proximity to or is supported, carried or suspended in association with, any such line;
Joint Inspection Report	The report prepared by the DL on the findings of the joint inspection carried out as per the terms of clause 14 and 15 of the guidelines, and the suitability of the proposed location.
LECO	Lanka Electricity Company (Pvt) Ltd
Local Authority	A Municipal Council, Urban Council or a Pradeshiya Sabha, and includes any authority created and established by or under any law to exercise, perform and discharge, powers, duties and functions corresponding to, or similar to the powers, duties and functions exercised, performed, and discharged by any such Council or Sabha

OPEX Program	Program approved by PUCSL which enables the DL to defray the costs for Operational Expenditures, and recover same from electricity tariff on a reimbursement basis
PRDA	Provincial Road Development Authority
PRDD	Provincial Road Development Department
Private Requests	Has the meaning in Clause 6 of these Guidelines
PUCSL	Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka
RDA	Road Development Authority
Working Day	A day other than Saturday, Sunday and/or a public holiday as declared by the minister under and in terms of the Holidays Act No. 29 of 1971 as amended

Guidelines

Who can make a request to shift/remove electric lines/poles in public roads?

1. (i) A request to shift/remove electric line(s)/pole(s) in a public road shall be made to the DL by
 - (a) a member of the public; or
 - (b) the Local Authority or other relevant authority to which the road wherein such electric line(s)/pole(s) is/are situate (“Appropriate Authority”), belongs

- (ii) A requirement of the DL to shift/remove electric line(s)/pole(s) in a public road shall be made known to the Appropriate Authority by the DL who owns such electric line(s)/pole(s).

Submission of requests

2. The request referred to in clause 1(i)(a) above shall be made to the DL in writing in the form more fully set out in the standard complaint form available at the DL’s area office/branches and/or customer service centers.

3. Such a request referred to in clause 1(i)(a) above shall be accompanied (as far as possible) by
 - a) a sketch indicating the current location of the electric line(s)/pole(s) sought to be shifted/removed together with photographic evidence.
 - b) the reasons as to why the electric line(s)/pole(s) should be shifted/removed
 - c) the type and number of electric line(s)/pole(s) to be shifted
 - d) the number of persons affected by the current location of the electric line(s)/pole(s)
 - e) the proposed new location of the electric line(s)/pole(s) (in the case of shifting)
 - f) the number of persons likely to be affected by the proposed location of the electric line(s)/pole(s)

4. All such requests referred to in clause 1(i)(a) above shall be made to the DL directly as specified in clause 1(i). However, in the event such a request is made to the Appropriate Authority as opposed to the DL, the Appropriate Authority shall forthwith refer such request together with the accompanying documents to the DL for necessary action and notify the member of the public so requesting in writing, of such referral.

5. The request referred to in clause 1(i)(b) above shall be in writing in the form of a letter and addressed to the Chief engineer/Area engineer of EDL or the Chief Engineer (Branch) of LECO (as the case may be) or any other relevant officer. Such request shall be accompanied by the information/documents referred to in clause 3 above and shall include a request for a joint inspection of the proposed location as provided below.

Evaluation of requests

6. A request received under clauses 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) shall be evaluated by the DL to determine its purpose.
7. Where a request received under clauses 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) above is based on any of the following grounds:
 - a) the current location of the electric line(s)/pole(s) is obstructing a right of way and/or entry into a private land or premises of the requestor, and/or
 - b) house modification by the requestor, and/or
 - c) any other personal/private reason of the requestor (which does not affect a larger section of the public)such requests by member(s) of the public or the Local Authority or other relevant authority, given its purpose being more personal/private in nature, shall be deemed to be “Private Requests”.
8. Where a request received under clauses 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) above is based on any of the following grounds:
 - a) the current location of the electric line(s)/pole(s) poses a risk of personal injury to any member of the public or damage to property; and/or
 - b) the electric line(s)/pole(s) obstructs the free flow of traffic, pedestrian movement and/or an approved development project and/or is giving rise to road accidentssuch requests by member(s) of the public or the Local Authority or other relevant authority, given that its purpose affects a larger section of the public, shall be deemed to be “Public Requests”.
9. The requests other than “Public Requests” received under clause 1(i)(b) and any requirements of the DL referred to in clause 1(ii) shall be evaluated by the DL to determine its reasonableness *inter alia* on grounds of public interest, necessity and resources.

Joint Inspection

10. Subsequent to the evaluation of the request and on being satisfied:
 - a) as to whether the request is a Private Request or a Public Request (in the case of a request received under 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) above); or
 - b) of the reasonableness of the request (in the case of a request other than “Public Requests” received under 1(i)(b)),the DL shall issue a notice in writing specifying a date and time to carry out a joint inspection of the proposed location by the relevant officers of the DL, the Appropriate Authority and other utility service providers (if applicable). Members of the public who initiated the request and/or are likely to be affected by the shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s) shall also be notified.

11. Subsequent to the evaluation of the requirement under clause 1(ii) above and being satisfied of the necessity for shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s), the DL shall make such requirement known in writing to the Appropriate Authority with a request for a joint inspection of the proposed location. Notice of such joint inspection shall be given to other utility service providers (if applicable) and members of the public who are likely to be affected by the shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s).
12. The joint inspection specified in clauses 10 and 11 shall be of the proposed location and other related matters on a mutually convenient date and time not more than fourteen (14) working days from the receipt of the request or the requirement being made known by the DL.
13. The notice for the joint inspection as specified in clause 10 and 11 shall be sent via registered post to the parties concerned not less than seven (07) days prior to the date of the proposed joint inspection. Where the relevant officer of the Appropriate Authority and/or other utility service provider is/are unable to be present, such officer may appoint an alternative officer to join the site inspection.
14. The proposed location shall be evaluated at the joint inspection *inter alia* on the following criteria;
 - a) safety and convenience to members of the public
 - b) technical feasibility including the ability to cause the least disruption to the existing road and drainage systems
 - c) outcomes/findings of the trial pit excavations (where required)
 - d) compliance with the Electricity (Safety, Quality and Continuity) Regulations of 2016 or any such Regulations issued by the PUCSL
 - e) cost effectiveness
15. Where the proposed location is considered ill-suited by the Appropriate Authority or by both the DL and Appropriate Authority, parties shall mutually agree on an alternative location for the shifting of the electric line(s)/pole(s) and same shall be evaluated in terms of clause 14. If the pole(s)/line(s) is/are planned to install on, under or over any land, wayleave process should be taken place in line with section 03 schedule II of the Electricity Act.
16. On completion of the joint inspection in terms of clause 14 and 15, the DL shall within seven (07) working days therefrom prepare a Joint Inspection Report and forward a copy of the same to the Appropriate Authority along with a road safety plan (if necessary).

Estimate of Cost

17. The Appropriate Authority shall within seven (07) working days of receiving the Joint Inspection Report, make available to the DL its cost estimate in respect of cutting, excavating and reinstating of the road and a security deposit (if any).
18. On identifying the proposed location and receiving the cost estimate from the Appropriate Authority in terms of clause 17, the DL shall prepare a Detailed Cost Estimate for

shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s) based on the Cost Reflective Methodology for Tariffs & Charges issued by PUCSL on 30th September 2016, as amended from time to time. The timelines for preparing such cost estimate shall be as follows:

- a) Low voltage (LV) lines – within seven (07) working days of receiving the cost estimate from the Appropriate Authority in terms of clause 17
- b) Medium Voltage (MV) lines – within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the cost estimate from the Appropriate Authority in terms of clause 17
- c) Medium Voltage Tower lines – within thirty (30) working days of receiving the cost estimate from the Appropriate Authority in terms of clause 17

19. The Detailed Cost Estimate shall contain the total costs for

- a) shifting of the electric line(s)/pole(s); and
- b) cutting, excavating and reinstating of the road and a security deposit (if any) required by the Appropriate Authority (which shall be made available by the Appropriate Authority in terms of Clause 17)

20. Subsequent to the preparation of the Detailed Cost Estimate and upon obtaining approval for the same, the DL shall make available the same to the relevant party for settlement, in the following manner:

- a) Where a request received under clauses 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) is a “Public Request”, the cost for shifting/removing such electric line(s)/pole(s) shall be borne by the DL up to five hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 500,000), and such cost shall be defrayed through the OPEX Program up to a maximum of five hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 500,000/=) for each case. In the event the cost estimate exceeds five hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 500,000/=), the DL shall make available a Detailed Cost Estimate to the requestor for payment of the balance cost in excess of five hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 500,000/=).
- b) Where a request received under clause 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) is a “Private Request” or where a request other than “Public Request” referred to in clause 1(i)(b) is made, the DL shall make available a Detailed Cost Estimate to the relevant requestor for payment.
- c) Where the DL has a requirement under clause 1(ii) above, the entire cost will be borne by the DL.

21. A requestor who is a member of the public or the Local Authority or other relevant authority may in the circumstances specified in clause 22 below, prefer an appeal to the DL and where the DL does not provide any recourse or the requestor is dissatisfied with the DL’s response, appeal to the PUCSL for consideration of his/her/its requirement/s regarding the Detailed Cost Estimate including requesting that the DL meet the relevant cost of shifting/removing the line(s)/pole(s) and defraying same through the OPEX Program up to a maximum of five hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 500,000/=) for each case.

22. An appeal referred to in clause 21 can be initiated in the circumstances laid out below and should be made to the DL within ten (10) working days of receiving the Detailed Cost Estimate from the DL:

- a) where a member of the public or the Local Authority or other relevant authority is presented with a Detailed Cost Estimate in terms of Clause 20(a) in excess of five hundred thousand (Rs.500,000) on the basis that it is a Public Request, but is unable to bear the balance cost (in excess of five hundred thousand (Rs.500,000)) of shifting/removing the electric line(s)/pole(s); or
- b) where a member of the public or the Local Authority or other relevant authority is presented with a Detailed Cost Estimate in terms of Clause 20(b) on the basis that it is a Private Request, but is of the view that his/her request is a Public Request; or
- c) has any other reasonable concern regarding the Detailed Cost Estimate.

Consent for shifting/removal

23. The DL shall obtain the consent of the Appropriate Authority for the shifting of electric line(s)/pole(s) under clause 1(i)(a) and 1(ii) above, as required by legislation governing the local authorities/other relevant authorities (RDA, PRDA, PRDD etc.), and the Appropriate Authority shall not unreasonably withhold such consent. The request for and granting of such consent shall be in writing and shall be signed by officers authorized to do so by the DL and Appropriate Authority respectively. It is required to issue such consent within fourteen (14) working days by the Appropriate Authority.

Approval of the request and Agreement

24. In relation to a request received under clause 1(i)(a) and 1(i)(b) above, the DL shall issue a letter to the requestor informing whether such request is approved. Where such request has been approved, the DL shall in the said letter set out the terms and conditions of shifting/removing of electric line(s)/pole(s) including but not limited to the agreed location to which the pole(s)/line(s) will be shifted, the timeline to carry out the work and payment terms. The letter shall be sent to the requestor via registered post within fourteen (14) days of consent being had and obtained in terms of clause 23 above.

25. The DL and the Appropriate Authority shall also enter into a standard form agreement for carrying out the shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s) within fourteen (14) days of consent being had and obtained in terms of clause 23 above, such agreement shall be in writing and shall *inter alia* include

- (a) the terms and conditions that is required to be met by the parties in carrying out the work (example; safety and quality standards including cleaning up of any rubble or debris from the shifting/removal)
- (b) the agreed location to which the pole(s)/line(s) will be shifted
- (c) timeline to carry out the work
- (d) duties and obligations of each party
- (e) payment terms
- (f) any variations to the agreement and any shifting required in future
- (g) any other approvals/permits that may be required
- (h) breach/ default of the agreement

Carrying out the shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s)

26. Prior to the commencement of the shifting/removal of electric line(s)/pole(s) the total cost associated with the same shall have been paid accordingly.
27. The DL shall shift/remove the electric line(s)/pole(s) within fourteen (14) Working Days from the DL and Appropriate Authority entering into an agreement in terms of clause 25, or if there is an inability to schedule a power interruption within such time, then on the nearest available date where a power interruption can be scheduled.
28. Upon the conclusion of the works, the DL shall notify the Appropriate Authority and if the requestor is a member of the public, such member of public in writing that the shifting/removing of the electric line(s)/pole(s) has been completed in terms of the agreement or letter, as the case may be, entered into or issued in terms of clauses 25 and 24 above respectively.

Dispute Resolution

29. Any disputes that may arise between the DL, the Appropriate Authority and/or member(s) of the public shall be governed by the laws of Sri Lanka and shall either be referred to the PUCSL to resolved as per the provisions in Section 46 of the SLEA and the Electricity (Dispute Resolution Procedure) Regulation or shall be submitted to the arbitration or courts of Sri Lanka.

-----//-----