

Guideline: Disconnection and Reconnection of Electricity Supply

1. Background

In terms of Section 28, Schedule II and Schedule III of the Sri Lanka Electricity Act, No. 20 of 2009 (as amended by Electricity Act, No. 31 of 2013) and in accordance with the:

- Statement of Rights and Obligations of Electricity Consumers issued by the Commission (ROEC)
- Supply Services Code of the licensees (SSC)
- Electricity (Safety, Quality and Continuity) Regulations of 2016 (R)

the licensees may disconnect/discontinue the electricity supply of any tariff customer/consumer when they do not fulfill the requirements stated in the above Act., Regulations, Code etc. At the same time, the licensees have the obligations to reconnect/restore the electricity supply of those tariff customers/consumers when such requirements are fulfilled by them.

2. Disconnection/Discontinuation

The instances that the licensees may disconnect/discontinue the electricity supply of any tariff customer/consumer are:

2.1 On the request of a tariff customer

On the request of a tariff customer, who is the owner or the occupant of the premises, after recovering all dues from him/her, a licensee may disconnect (temporarily/permanently) the electricity supply provided to the premises of such tariff customer at a mutually pre-arranged time. If the tariff customer is the owner or occupier but the premise is occupied and electricity is consumed by any other occupier, the licensee may disconnect the supply on the request of the tariff customer, as stated in (B.1 (a) and B.2 under Part II of ROEC, 3.2.1(a) of SSC.

2.2 Failure to provide security deposit

It is the obligation of the tariff customer to provide a new security deposit or the balance amount required as a result of an increase in average consumption of electricity within seven (7) days of a notice from the licensee. The licensee may disconnect the supply of such tariff customers who fail to do so, as stated in Section 28(1) and 28(2) of the Electricity Act and in C.1 under Part III of ROEC.

2.3 Failure to pay electricity bills and any other charges due to licensees

It is the obligation of any tariff customer to pay, within the requisite period, all charges due to the respective licensee in respect of the supply of electricity or the provision of the meter, electric line or electrical plant for the purpose of that supply. In the event the tariff customer fails to pay such payment, the licensee may disconnect his/her electricity supply after giving a notice of at least ten (10) days (Schedule-II, Item 1(5) and (6) of the Electricity Act) containing:

- a) the reasons for disconnection
- b) the requirements to be fulfilled for reconnection
- c) action that can be taken by tariff customer to prevent such disconnection

The licensee cannot disconnect the supply of any tariff customer who paid the said charges due to the licensee on or before the last date of the notice, that is, if the date appearing on the acknowledgement of the payment of the said charges is on or before the last date of the notice. It is the obligation of the licensees to get the payments of such tariff customers realized within Five (5) working days for the payments made to Post Offices and Sub Post Offices and within Three (3) working days for the payments made to the institutions approved by the licensees into the respective billing accounts. Further, before disconnection orders are issued for non-payment of the said charges, after Five (5) working days of the last date of the notice, the licensees have to check the respective billing accounts and extract the cases for which such payments were not made and disconnection orders to be issued only for such cases.

However, in any event, if cheques tendered by any tariff customer are dishonored and returned to the licensee by the bank, the licensee can disconnect the electricity supply of such tariff customer without any further notice and recover the losses incurred due to such transaction.

2.4 Failure to pay monthly installment

If any tariff customer/consumer has entered into an agreement with the licensee to pay any amount due to licensee (other than charges referred in 2.3 above) in regular installments and if the tariff customer/consumer failed to pay such installments on or before the due date, as stated in B.1 (d) under Part II of ROEC and 3.2.1(c) of SSC, the licensee may disconnect the supply of the tariff customer/consumer after giving notice of at least Ten (10) days.

The licensee cannot disconnect the supply of such tariff customer who paid the agreed amount and produced the acknowledgement that shows the date of payment on the agreed date or the date before.

2.5 Using appliances that interfere with others supply

If any tariff customer/consumer uses any appliance, which unduly or improperly interferes with the electricity supply of any other consumers, the licensee can issue a notice to such tariff customer/consumer to cease using such appliance within a specified period and if the tariff customer/consumer failed to comply with the notice in accordance with B.1(e) under Part II of ROEC, 3.2.1(d) of SSC, R59 and R60, the licensee may disconnect their electricity supply.

2.6 Using electricity in a dangerous or unsafe manner

If any tariff customer/consumer uses his electricity supply in a dangerous or unsafe manner, which can cause injury to the persons at the tariff customer's/consumer's premises or public at large, the licensee shall disconnect such electricity supply without giving notice, but after disconnection, as reasonably as practicable, the licensees shall serve a notice in writing to the tariff customer/consumer the reasons for such disconnection and applicable details of any remedial measures required in accordance with 3.2.1(e) of SSC and R61.

2.7 On any emergency

The licensees may discontinue the electricity supply of any tariff customer/consumer:

- in order to prevent danger or to undertake essential emergency repairs in accordance with B.1.(g) under Part II of ROEC and R65(ii)

- if there is an urgent need relating to the safe or proper operation of the network in accordance with R65(iii)

2.8 Convicted of an offence

If any person is convicted of an offence under Schedule-II, Item 4 of the Electricity Act., the licensee may discontinue the electricity supply of such person until the matter has been remedied.

2.9. Disputed Charges

The licensee shall not disconnect the electricity supply of any tariff customer, if there is a genuine dispute between the licensee and the tariff customer in accordance with Schedule-II, Item 5(7) of the Electricity Act with respect to the following charges due to the licensees:

1. Security deposit (refer 2.2 above)
2. Electricity bill payment (refer 2.3 above)
3. Monthly installment (refer 2.4 above)

2.10. Time not permitted for disconnection

The licensees shall not disconnect the electricity supply of any tariff customer/consumer for the cases in 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, as stated in Schedule-II, Item 6 of the Electricity Act and B.5 under Part II of the ROEC:

- Public holidays, Saturdays and Sundays
- Before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m. on any other day

3. Reconnection

3.1 Disconnected supply under 2.1 above

Disconnected electricity supply of any tariff customer, who is the owner and the occupier of the premises, as in the case of 2.1 above, can be reconnected at a mutually pre-arranged time after collecting charges approved by the Commission. If the owner is not the occupier, such disconnected electricity supply can be reconnected to the occupant of the premises only after obtaining documentary proof as occupant of the premises and entering into a fresh agreement with him/her as a new tariff customer after recovering required security deposit and reconnection charges.

3.2 Disconnected supply under 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 above

In terms of Schedule-II, Item 2 of the Electricity Act, disconnected electricity supply of the cases in 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 above, shall be reconnected by the licensee within two (2) working days after fulfillment of all the requirements by the tariff customer. Breach of that duty which causes any loss or damage to that person shall be actionable at the suit or instances of that person.

3.3 Disconnected supply under 2.5 above

Disconnected electricity supply of the case in 2.5 above can be reconnected by the licensee within two (2) working days upon the consumer ceased using the appliance unduly or improperly interfered with the electricity supply of other consumers, as stated in B.9 under Part II of ROEC and R 62.

3.4 Disconnected supply under 2.6 above

Disconnected electricity supply of the case in 2.6 can be reconnected as soon as practicable upon the licensee being satisfied that the persons at the tariff customers' premises or public at large are safe from electrical hazards, as stated in B.10 under Part II of ROEC and in R 62.

3.5 Discontinued supply under 2.7 above

Discontinued electricity supply of the case in 2.7 can be restored as early as possible upon completing the emergency repairs. The affected tariff customers/consumers shall be informed of the expected time of restoration of the supply by the licensees.

3.6 Discontinued supply under 2.8 above

Discontinued electricity supply of the case in 2.8 above shall be reconnected by the licensee immediately after remedying the matter and in accordance with the Court order.

4. Dispute Resolution

Any dispute arising under sections 2 and 3 above can be referred to the respective Deputy General Manager of the Ceylon Electricity Board or Head of Operations of the Lanka Electricity Company (Private) Limited as a Dispute Resolution Officer under PART I of the Electricity (Dispute Resolution Procedure) Rules Published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 1951/1 dated 25th January 2016.

Where the parties to a dispute referred fail to reach a settlement which is acceptable to both parties, either party to the dispute may inform the Commission and call upon to resolve the same through mediation under Part-II of the above Rules.