

MADHYA PRADESH ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Important Information for Electricity Consumers

Commission receives a number of grievances from time to time on different issues from the electricity consumers. It is found in most of the cases that the cause of grievances is due to lack of requisite information of various issues. The Commission feels that an awareness on various relevant current issues be brought amongst the consumers. In this context brief details on various issues related to the Consumer grievances are given below:-

Electronic Meters:-

Meter is installed in the consumer premises for measurement of quantum of electricity supplied. The purpose is to determine the amount of electricity consumed and the Board gets its due costs. It is the responsibility of the Board as per the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003, that a meter of appropriate capacity for measurement of quantity of electricity consumed in the premises of the consumer, is provided. It is also the responsibility of the Board to maintain the accuracy of measurement through the meter within permissible limits. Indian Electricity Rules, 1956 provide that the meter would be treated as accurate if its measurement accuracy is within the limit of +3%. Installation of electro mechanical type of meters has been in practice for determining the Consumption of electricity. The design of meter is such that it has movable parts. When the supply is availed through this meter, the disc of the meter rotates which in turn rotates gears and dial-register.

The dial register displays reading commensurate with the consumption of electricity. These meters tend to slow down with passage of time due to deposition of dust on movable parts and increase of friction. Thus, the consumption recorded by these meters is less than actual, Moreover, if the load in use is less compared to the rated capacity of the meter than also it slows down or does not record at all if the loads are too low. Electro mechanical meters are therefore needed to be tested periodically or replaced. Normally, there are no complaints of excess recording in such meters. Electronic meters have been available in the Indian markets since last few years. Since, these meters do not have movable parts, therefore chances of error in measurement of consumption are very less. Moreover, even if the loads are very low as

compared to the rated capacity of the meter, measurement is done accurately. Life of Electronic meter is much more as compared to electro mechanical meter. Chances of tampering electronic meters for the purpose of dishonest abstraction of energy are very less as compared to the electro-mechanical meter. Use of Electronic meters is therefore essential so that honest consumers do not suffer on account of losses due to tampering of electro mechanical meters. Electronic meters are now being used in a number of States in the country. While, the HT consumers have already been provided with electronic meters, the work for replacement of electro mechanical meter has been commenced by the Board from the year 2001. Some of the consumers have the impression that the electronic meters tend to run fast and record more consumption which is not true. However, in order to safeguard the interest of the consumers, Commission has directed the Board to act promptly on the complaints received from consumers regarding meter working. It has been directed that on application of the consumer accompanied by the prescribed fee, the testing of meter should be ensured within 30 days. Testing fee for single phase meter is Rs. 50/- or for three phase meters Rs 75/-. It has been further directed to the Board that testing of meters on consumer request should be done at the testing laboratory in presence of consumer or his representative on a pre appointed date and time which is informed to the consumer in advance. Testing fee shall have to be refunded through adjustment in electricity bills if the meter is found defective as stated by the consumer. Bills of the consumer shall also have to be revised accordingly.

Meter rent:

Some of the consumers have the impression that the meter rent is not recoverable as per law. It is to clarify here that Section 45(3) (b) provides for recovery of meter rent. The rent is basically recoverable in lieu of the investment on cost of meter, its maintenance, replacement etc. The Commission determines meter rent to be charged only after thorough in-depth examination of all the related costs.

Security Deposit against the Meter:-

Electricity Act, under section 47(1) (b) provides that the Distribution licensee may require security deposit against the meter installed at the consumer premises. Presently the Board is recovering security deposit against the consumption at the time of giving new connection and

reviews it periodically based on the actual consumption of the consumer. The Board at present is not recovering Security Deposit against the meter.

Issue of average bills:

Meter reading schedule is prescribed for different categories of consumers. Meter reading is normally done once in two or three months except the connection of industries in LT consumer categories. HT consumer meters are read every month. Average bills are issued for the months where the readings are not taken and these bills are subsequently adjusted in the bills when the actual meter reading is done. The consumers have however some misgivings regarding the average bills. Commission also intends that the Bills to the consumers be provided on the basis of readings as far as possible.

Meter reading schedule for different categories of consumers has now been prescribed in M.P. Electricity Supply Code '2004. Details for the periodicity of readings under various categories of consumers, particularly LT consumers, have been given at clause 9.1 of the Supply Code. It is worth mentioning here that for the towns of Municipal Corporations, Municipalities having population of more than 1 lac and District Head quarters, meter reading of domestic consumers is directed to be taken on a monthly basis. This is being reviewed and implementation is expected in near future.

Energy Security Deposit:-

Electricity Act, 2003 under section 47(1) (a) provides that the Distribution licensee may require security against the supply of energy. The Board has been charging security deposit under this head from all consumers based on the tariff applicable and the consumption recorded. Except agricultural pump, seasonal industries, the security deposit is recovered equivalent to 45 days consumption bill. Review of security deposit is done annually for LT consumers and six monthly for HT consumers and additional security deposit is demanded, if required.

Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum:-

The Commission has issued Regulations for ensuring redressal of the consumer complaints within specified time limits. As per provisions of Electricity Act, 2003, Regulations

have been issued for Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum and Ombudsman. These regulations also provides for a two tier Redressal of complaints by the Board and its Distribution Companies. The Consumer may lodge complaint with the Junior Engineer/Assistant Engineer of the concerned area at the first level of complaint redressal. If the consumer is not satisfied with the redressal at this level, he may approach to the second level by lodging the complaint with the concerned area Assistant Engineer/Executive Engineer. Time limits for different types of complaints have been specified. If the consumer is still not satisfied with the redressal of his complaint through this system, he may lodge the complaint with the "Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum". These forums are operative in all the three Distribution Companies of the State with head quarter at Jabalpur, Bhopal and Indore. Generally it is observed that if the consumer is not satisfied with the redressal of his complaint at the first level he complaints either to the higher level officers of the Government or the Commission, which results in unnecessary delay as the complaint is required to be redirected to the concerned department. Now, since the "Consumer Redressal Grievances Forum" has been established, it will be appropriate that the complaint is lodged with this forum, if the consumer is not satisfied with the redressal at level-I and level -II of the Board. It is worth mentioning that detailed instructions have been issued regarding the procedure to be adopted for redressal of consumer grievances by the forum. Normally, the forum should settle the complaints within 30 days of its receipt which may extend to 45 days.

Call Centers:

Call Centres have been established at Jabalpur, Bhopal, Indore and Ujjain for prompt redressal of consumer's grievances. These call centers register all types of complaints over telephone including the complaints for interruptions in supply. Complaints received are forwarded promptly to the concerned field officers of the Board and the continuous monitoring is done. Telephone no. of call centre is 12660 for Jabalpur which covers consumers in the area of East Distribution Company and Bhopal which covers area of Central Distribution Company. Telephone No. 1912 is of call centres at Indore, Ujjain, covering the area of West Distribution Company. Consumers may utilize the services of call centres for redressal of their Grievances.