
ELECTRICITY CONSUMER'S - RIGHTS STATEMENT

This Consumers' Rights Statement is a synopsis of rights available under the Electricity Act 2003 to consumers of electricity, with the twin objectives of enabling consumers to protect themselves by creating an awareness regarding the rights available and the service as well as the level of quality that consumers may reasonably expect from the electricity distribution companies in their area of supply.

I. RIGHT TO KNOW

Consumers have the following basic rights to have access to information on matters related to electricity supply —

1. The conditions and procedure for getting new connection, disconnection, reconnection, change in load/name/tariff category.
2. Standards of performance regarding quality to be maintained and services to be provided by Distribution Licensees.
3. The code of practice on payment of bills.
4. Complaint handling procedures and grievance redressal.
5. Tariff schedule and other schedule of Charges approved by the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (“MERC”).
6. Correctness of meter.
7. To know and choose the electric service provider upon fulfilling certain eligibility conditions Under Open Access and implementation of retail competition.

II. PROCEDURE FOR GETTING NEW CONNECTION

Consumers have several rights, namely:

1. To receive application form(s) free of cost at any of the offices of electricity distribution companies in their area of supply.
2. To access the application form and format of the agreement to be executed for obtaining new connections from the website of the electricity distribution company in order to download the electronic media version of the application form as well as agreement format.

3. To know the status of their application and information about the reasons of non-disposal or rejection thereof, personal hearing, appeal and removal of deficiencies.
4. To receive a copy of the agreement after the same has been executed for obtaining a new connection.
5. To receive prior intimation regarding the visit/ entry into their premises by an authorized representative of the electricity distribution company in their area of supply.
6. To demand proof of identity from such representatives of the electricity distribution company visiting their premises.
7. To know the charges that the applicant / consumer has to pay to get the supply/new connection as per Schedule of Charges approved by MERC.
8. To receive supply within the time provided in the Electricity Act, 2003 ("EA 2003") read with the Standards of Performance regulations notified by the MERC after following the correct procedure as laid down in the Electricity Supply Code notified by the MERC on payment of fees and charges as per Schedule of Charges approved by MERC.
9. To receive the receipt of fees and charges paid to the Distribution Licensee.

III. SECURITY DEPOSIT

1. It is the responsibility of consumer to deposit security by way of cash/ cheque /demand draft but in case of consumer having monthly consumption not less than One Lac units he has a right to opt for irrevocable letter of credit, or unconditional bank guarantee issued by a scheduled commercial bank.
2. On payment of security deposit in cash (including cheque / demand draft), consumers have the right to receive interest, provided that the deposit amount (in cash) is Rs. 50 or more.
3. Excess amount deposited by consumer towards Security is refundable to the consumers with interest.

IV. METERS

1. The Energy meter measures the amount of Energy consumed, Maximum Demand and other electrical parameters of tariff applicable and is used by the electricity distribution company to determine the monthly bill. Authorized representatives of the electricity distribution company have the right to access the meter for the purposes of installing, reading, repairing, replacing and testing the meter.
2. Consumers can purchase the meter from the electricity distribution company or any supplier of meters as per the specifications of the Central Electricity Authority.
3. Consumers have the right to get the meter tested for accuracy upon making a request to the electricity distribution company and upon payment of testing charges. Besides the testing facility of the electricity distribution company, consumers have the right to get the meter tested at such facility as may be approved by the MERC. Consumers have the right to receive a copy of the meter test report, which in any case should be provided within two months from the date of request for testing.

V. BILLING

Consumers have the right to

1. Receive bills with such detailed particulars (including due date for payment) as specified in the Electricity Supply Code notified by the MERC at the intervals of at least once in every two months in respect of consumers in town and cities and at least once in three months in respect of all other consumers. A duplicate copy of the bill may also be demanded in case of loss of the original bill and to know the amount of the bill (including due date for payment) on the spot from the office of the electricity distribution company designated for the purpose. Consumers also have the right to report non-receipt or loss of bill over telephone and to request for the amount of the bill (including due date for payment) after providing identity verification.
2. Demand from the electricity distribution company an explanation of the basis of computation of the bill.

VI. RIGHT TO RECEIVE NOTICE AND DUE PROCESS PRIOR TO DISCONNECTION AND PROCEDURE OF RECONNECTION

Consumers have a right

1. To receive minimum fifteen clear days' notice in writing before disconnection under default of payment under section 56 of the Act.
2. To pay under protest an amount equal to the sum claimed from him or the electricity charges due from him for each month calculated on the basis of average charge for electricity paid by him during preceding six months, whichever is less, pending disposal of any dispute between him and the Distribution Licensee.
3. To receive thirty days notice in writing before disconnection for failure to deposit required security amount under Section 47 of the Act.
4. To receive supply after removing cause(s) of the disconnection by the consumer and obtaining the reconnection order by paying the amounts due within a period stipulated in Standards of Performance Regulations.
5. Right of prior notice is not available in cases where the consumer's installation poses a danger to the health or safety of other consumers or electricity supplier's employees or the public and in cases where the consumer is indulging in theft or unauthorized use of electricity.

VII. STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE OF ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES

Certain standards of performance of the electricity distribution companies are guaranteed under the Standards of Performance regulations notified by the MERC. Consumers have a right to receive service at such standards, some of which are provided below:

1. To receive supply at the voltage and frequency as per Standards of Performance regulations notified by the MERC at the point of supply.
2. To lodge a complaint to customer care centre and get it rectified in case of
 - 2.1 Failure of supply
 - 2.2 Unsafe or dangerous condition (e.g. electric shock, fire etc) of installation or distribution - transmission system.
 - 2.3 Theft or unauthorized use of electricity.

Distribution Licensee shall take necessary actions and ensure about remedy.

3. To have meter(s) read by the authorized representative(s) of the electricity distribution company as per time schedule provided in the Standards of Performance regulations notified by the MERC.
4. To seek change in name or change in tariff category.
5. To seek addition/reduction in contract demand/sanctioned load.
6. To seek closure of account.
7. To claim compensation on account of failure to maintain Standards of Performance by the electricity distribution company.

VIII. CONSUMER SERVICE CENTRE

Consumers have a right to visit personally or to communicate with the help of any medium of communication to consumer service centres established by the electricity distribution companies to get information or to lodge the complaint. The consumer service centres will provide essential services including facility for payment of bills.

IX. COPIES OF CONSUMER RIGHTS STATEMENT, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CODE, STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE REGULATIONS, TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SUPPLY, SCHEDULE OF CHARGES TARIFF SCHEDULE

Consumers have the right to demand copies of the above documents on payment of reproduction charges (Consumer Right Statement: will be free of cost), from consumer service centres, division office, circle office, section office, ward office of the electricity distribution company. Consumers also have the right to access above documents from the website of the electricity distribution company in order to download the electronic media version of the above documents.

X. COMPLAINT HANDLING AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

Consumers have the right to have their grievances redressed in accordance with the regulations notified by the MERC under the provisions of Section 42(5) and (7) of the EA 2003. A synopsis of the rights available to consumers is provided below:

1. To demand from cash collection centres and offices of the electricity distribution company copies of the rules and procedures for redressal of grievances made by the electricity distribution company as well as the regulations notified by the MERC under the provisions of Section 42(5) and (7) of the EA 2003, by paying photocopying charges.
2. To know from the electricity distribution company the postal and street address, the phone and fax number and, if available, electronic mail address of the Internal Grievance Redressal Cells (“IGR Cells”), Consumer Grievance Redressal Forums (“Forums”) and Electricity Ombudsman.
3. To know from the electricity distribution company —
 - 3.1 the manner and the form in which a grievance may be made to the IGR Cells;
 - 3.2 the assistance available from and the duties of the IGR Cells;
 - 3.3 the assistance available from the Forums;
 - 3.4 all remedies in law available regarding an act or failure to act in respect of a right or duty conferred or imposed on the electricity distribution company by the EA 2003 or Regulations, as the case may be, including the manner of filing an appeal to the Electricity Ombudsman;
 - 3.5 any additional rules, procedures or circulars made or issued in relation to the regulations notified by the MERC under the provisions of Section 42(5) and (7) of the EA 2003.

XI. CHOICE OF SUPPLIER

Consumers in some areas fulfilling the eligibility conditions specified in the Distribution Open Access regulations made by MERC under Section 42(4) of EA 2003, have the opportunity to choose the company that supplies their electricity, while the duties of the local electricity distribution company with respect to such supply shall be of a common carrier providing non-discriminatory open access with the duty to maintain the poles and the wires connected to the premises. There are certain rules and regulations that consumers should refer when selecting an alternative supplier. For more information contact the local electricity distribution company or visit www.mercindia.org.in.

"This Statement has been approved by MERC on **August 1, 2006**.

MORE INFORMATION

For the rules which electricity distribution companies are required to follow and for more information, consumers should contact the local electricity distribution company in their area of supply. For information specific to your service area, visit the company web sites listed below or write to Managing Director / General Manager of the electricity distribution company at the address mentioned below.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited

www.mahadiscom.in

Tata Power Company Limited

www.tatapower.com

Reliance Energy Limited

www.rel.co.in

Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking

www.bestundertaking.com

Mula Pravara Electric Co-operative Society

Not Available.

Addresses of the Managing Director / General Manager of the Electricity Distribution Companies:

The Managing Director,
Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd.,
Prakashgad, Bandra (East),
Mumbai 400 051.

The Executive Vice Chairman,
Reliance Energy Limited, Reliance Energy Centre,
Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 055.

The General Manager,
BEST Undertaking,
BEST Bhavan, BEST Marg,
Fort, Mumbai 400 001

The Managing Director,
Tata Power Company Ltd.,
Bombay House, 24, Homi Modi Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.

The Managing Director,
Mula Pravara Electric Co-op. Society Ltd., Shrirampur 413 709
Taluka Shrirampur, District Ahmednagar

Note: As this statement is common for all utilities the term 'Electricity Distribution Company' has been used in generic manner. Distribution Licensees shall keep website address and address of Managing Director / General Manager and address of concerned officer applicable for them only on their booklet.