

অসম



ৰাজপত্ৰ

# THE ASSAM GAZETTE

অসাধাৰণ

EXTRAORDINARY

প্ৰাপ্ত কৰ্তৃত্বৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰকাশিত

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GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

ASSAM ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

## NOTIFICATION

The 22nd December, 2003

**No. AERC. 65/2003/101.**— In exercise of the power conferred on it by Section 181 read with Sub-section 5 of Section 42 of The Electricity Act, 2003 (36 of 2003) and all other powers enabling in this behalf, the Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission lays down the following Guidelines.

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## INTRODUCTION

- 1.0 The Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission (hereinafter “AERC”) recognizes the urgency and need for enhancing the levels of service to the electricity consumers in the State of Assam. It accords high importance to the rights of the customers. With the objective of safeguarding their interests, AERC proposes that the Distribution Licensees (in the State as defined in Clause 17 of Section 2 of Electricity Act, 2003, which shall include Assam State Electricity Board to the extent of its activities of distribution and supply of electricity) implement these “Guidelines for Redressal of Consumer Grievances” to streamline and simplify the process for registration and resolution of complaints.
- 2.0 The AERC shall review and modify these Guidelines from time-to-time to ensure that the Distribution Licensees continuously focus on further improvement of consumer services. As the infrastructure of the utility improves, the AERC shall also propose an incentive-penalty mechanism in future to ensure compliance and improved levels of service.
- 3.0 The Distribution Licensees must strive hard to ensure quality power and good service. The responsibility of timely and satisfactory resolution of consumer complaints lies with the Distribution Licensee. However, if the consumers’ complaints are not resolved to their satisfaction, the consumer will be free to approach the Electricity Ombudsman as per the Guidelines provided in “AERC (Electricity Ombudsman) Regulations”.
- 4.0 Distribution Licensee shall declare one day of the week as “ Consumer complaint redressal day” and give a wide publicity to it so that aggrieved consumers can discuss their complaints with the concerned officers of the Distribution Licensee on that day and get those resolved as far as possible.

The Distribution Licensee shall also take all necessary steps to give wide publicity to these ‘Guidelines for Redressal of Consumer Grievance’ through publication in newspapers, and through use of the electronic media. These informations shall also be made available on their websites. Any changes / improvements will also be similarly publicized. The consumer should also be made aware of his rights and duties from time to time.

All necessary forms / rules related to complaints shall be stocked in sufficient quantities at all offices and shall be made available to the consumers as and when required.

- 5.0 The Distribution Licensees shall identify the operational level officer/person/

registration center for the complainant to approach in the first instance for solution to the grievance of a consumer. It is expected that many of the grievances shall be attended in this first stage itself. The first stage shall also have a two level complaint handling process. This is to enable the concerned departments, division etc and the immediate superior officer to settle the issues, which may arise on a day-to-day basis. If there is no settlement within the stipulated time, the matters should automatically be referred to the Consumer Redressal Forum. The complainant shall also have the right to approach the Consumer Redressal Forum. .

- 6.0 The officers/ persons etc. to be contacted by the Consumer in the first instance and also the redressal forum shall comprise of persons to be nominated by the Distribution Licensee. The Redressal forum is intended to provide a focal point where the decisions will be taken on the Consumer Grievances without delay and in an objective manner. This is also to give an opportunity to the Distribution Licensee to satisfactorily settle the grievances of the consumer without the need for the Consumer to approach the Ombudsman. In the event the Consumer is not satisfied with the redressal of the grievances by the Forum he will be entitled to make a representation to the Ombudsman.
- 7.0 The Distribution Licensee shall give wide publicity of the name, designation, address and telephone No. of Officials-in-Charge for information of the consumer.

The rights of the consumer under these guidelines shall be without prejudice to his other rights.

- 8.0 Forms 1 and 2 are available as Annexure to these ‘Guidelines for Redressal of Consumer Grievances’.

## **CHAPTER – I : PRELIMINARY**

### **(1) Short Title and Commencement**

- (1) These Guidelines may be called the “Guidelines for Redressal of Consumer Grievances”.
- (2) These guidelines extend to the whole of the State of Assam concurrent with the jurisdiction for the supply of electricity by the distribution licensees.
- (3) These guidelines shall come into force from the date of its publication in the official Gazette of Government of Assam.

**(2) Definitions**

- (1) In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:
- a) "Act" means the Electricity Act, 2003 (No.36 of 2003);
  - b) "Complainant" shall include :—
    - (i) a consumer as defined under Clause (15) of Section 2 of the Act which shall include the legal heirs and successors;
    - (ii) Occupier or user of the premises;
    - (iii) any voluntary consumer association registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or under any other law for the time being in force till the Commission notify a procedure for recognition of associations, groups, firms or bodies corporate as registered consumer associations for the purpose of representation before the Commission;
    - (iv) the Central Government or the State Government – or any local authority; and
    - (v) one or more consumers, representing a group of consumers having the same interest;
  - c) "Complaint" means any grievance of the consumers in the area of supply of the distribution licensee relating to the supply of electricity or rendering of service by the Distribution Licensee and without prejudice to the generality of the above the following:
    - (i) any unfair trade practice or a restrictive trade practice adopted by the distribution licensee in providing electricity supply or service to the consumer;
    - (ii) the electricity supply or services hired or availed of or agreed to be hired or availed of by the consumer from the distribution licensee suffer from any defect or deficiency in any respect;
    - (iii) the distribution licensee has charged or proposed to charge for the electricity services mentioned in the complaint, amount in excess of the tariff or price determined or approved by the Commission under the Act;
    - (iv) electricity supply or services are being offered or allowed by the distribution licensee for conveyance or use in contravention of the

provisions of any law in regard to standard and or performance or safety or security for the time being in force; and

- (v) electricity supply or services are being offered or allowed by the licensee without complying with the provisions of law requiring the distribution licensee to display information in regard to the use of such supply or services.
- d) "Consumer" means any person who is supplied with electricity or who has applied for a connection for his own use by a licensee or the Government or by any other person engaged in the business of supplying electricity to the public under the Act or any other law for the time being in force and includes any person whose premises are for the time being connected for the purpose of receiving electricity with the network of a licensee, the Government or such other person, as the case may be; or whose electricity supply has been disconnected;
- e) "Consumer dispute" means a dispute where the person against whom a complaint has been made, denies or disputes the allegations contained in the complaint;
  - f) "Distribution licensee " means a licensee authorised to operate and maintain a distribution system for supplying electricity to the consumers in his area of supply; and includes Assam State Electricity Board or any of its successor entity under the provisions of Section 131 of the Act.
  - g) "Defect" means any fault, imperfection or shortcoming in the quality, quantity, purity or standard of service, including in the equipment or material which is required to be maintained by or under any law for the time being in force or under any contract, express or implied, or as is claimed by the distribution licensee in any manner whatsoever in relation to electricity service;
  - h) "Deficiency" means any fault, imperfection, shortcoming or inadequacy in the quality, nature and manner of performance which is required to be maintained by/ under any law for the time being in force or has been undertaken to be performed by distribution licensee in relation to electricity service or performance standard; including Interruption or failure of Power Supply, Voltage complaints, Metering Problems including Meter shifting, Charges / Payments (Billing Problems), Disconnection or Reconnection of Power supply, New Connections or Extensions in Load, Notice of supply interruptions, violations of Electricity Supply Code, contraventions of Act, Rules or Guidelines made there under with regard to consumer interest.
  - i) "Electricity Service" shall include supply, billing, metering and maintenance of electrical energy to the consumer and all other attendant

sub-services;

- j) "Forum" means 'Forum for Redressal of Grievance of Consumers', to be constituted by each distribution licensee in terms of these Guidelines.
  - k) "Ombudsman" means an authority to be appointed or designated by the Commission under a separate Regulation issued for the purpose under sub-section (6) of section 42 of the Act, to whom a representation may be made by any consumer aggrieved by non-redressal of grievances by the Forum.
  - l) "Commission" means the Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission recognised under Sub-section (1) of Section 86 of the Act as the Commission.
- (2) All other expressions used herein but not specifically defined herein but defined in the Act shall have the meaning assigned to them in the Act.

## **CHAPTER – II : NATURE OF COMPLAINTS AND DUTY OF THE DISTRIBUTION LICENSEES**

### **(3) Nature of Complaint and Its Registration**

- (1) The Consumer complaints are to be classified for convenience of handling of the following categories :
- a) Interruption in power supply
  - b) Voltage related complaints
  - c) Load shedding / scheduled outage
  - d) Meter related complaints
  - e) Complaints related to billing, collection etc.
  - f) Disconnection and reconnection of power supply
  - g) Delay in new service connection or extension of Load
  - h) Others
- (2) The Distribution Licensee shall maintain at each of the office of Assistant Engineer of the distribution licensee a register for registering the complaints

received.

- (3) The Consumer complaints shall be duly registered under the above categories within 2 hours of the receipt of the Complaint.
- (4) The concerned officers of the Distribution Licensee shall deal with the Complaint in the manner set out in Schedule 1 to these guidelines. The Distribution Licensee shall follow the implementation steps specified in Schedule 2.
- (5) In the event the grievance of the consumer is not redressed satisfactory to the consumer within the period specified in Schedule-I to these guidelines and the consumer does not accept in writing of such satisfactory resolution of the grievance, the officer concerned shall with 3 days forward the complaint together with his comments to the Forum for further action.
- (6) The complainant may at any time after the expiry of the period specified in Schedule 1 approach the Forum for redressal of the grievance of the consumer.
- (7) The Distribution Licensee and its officers, agents and representatives, in dealing with the consumer complaints, shall be guided by the following:
  - a) the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the rules and regulations framed there under;
  - b) the standard of performance for the Distribution Licensee including as laid down in the Distribution Code, Electricity Supply Code, Complaint Handling Procedures, the License terms and conditions under any other order or directions, of the Commission shall have to be duly complied with and fulfilled;
  - c) the distribution licensee is undertaking a public utility service and that the consumer who is paying for the service is entitled to expect quality and prompt service;
  - d) the resolution of complaint is done promptly;
  - e) the resolution of the complaint satisfactorily is to preserve or enhance the relationship between the licensee and the consumer;
  - f) the intention should be to encourage amicable resolution of disputes without formal legal representation or reliance on legal procedures;
  - g) the Complaints are generally taken up and decided on first come first serve basis without showing undue preference to any person; and
  - h) proper and accurate records of the complaints received, action taken and

the reaction of the consumer concerned are duly maintained.

**CHAPTER – III : FORUM FOR REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES  
OF THE CONSUMERS**

**(4) Constitution of the Forum for Redressal of Grievances of the Consumers :**

- (1) Every existing distribution licensee, shall not later than the two months from the date of the publication of these guidelines and any new distribution licensee within six months from the grant of license, establish a Forum for redressal of grievances of the consumers in accordance with these regulations.
- (2) The Forum shall consist of three members to be appointed by the Distribution Licensee with the following composition.
  - a) A serving officer of the Distribution Licensee or a retired person to be designated by the Distribution Licensee possessing degree in electrical engineering and having at least Fifteen Years experience in the distribution of electricity and having served not below the rank of Superintending Engineer, who will be the Chairman of the Forum.

Provided when the Chairman of Forum is unable to discharge the functions owing to absence, illness or any other cause, the member indicated in Sub-Clause 2.0 (b) of Clause 2.0 of this Chapter shall discharge the functions of the Chairman until the day when the Chairman assumes office.
  - b) One shall be a serving or a retired person having at least ten years of experience in accounting out of which at least five years in revenue matters and not below the rank of Deputy Manager (Accounts).
  - c) One shall be a representative of a Consumer Association / Non-Governmental Organisation actively engaged in protecting the interests of electricity consumers, or a representative from the members of the State Advisory Committee constituted under section 87 of the Act, to be nominated by the distribution licensee.
- (3) The Commission may direct the Distribution Licensee to substitute a member of the Forum with another person as per the composition and qualification provided in sub-clause (2) above if in the opinion of the Commission such substitution is necessary for the proper discharge of the functions of the forum and redressal of the grievances of the Consumers.

- (4) Every member of the Forum shall hold office for a term of two years with a provision for extension of term by one more year, but shall not be eligible for reappointment at any time after the expiry of his term of appointment provided that no person shall be appointed as member after he attains the age of 62 years.
- (5) The Forum shall receive the complaints forwarded or filed with the Forum so long such complaint is in writing and the Forum shall not insist or prescribe any format for filing of the complaint or for entertaining them. The Forum may, however, seek information and details from the complainant.
- (6) The Forum shall decide the Complaint expeditiously and shall communicate its decision to the Complainant within a period not exceeding 30 days of the receipt of the Complaint by the Forum. The Forum shall give the reasons in support of its decisions.
- (7) The Forum shall maintain a regular office at the principal place of business of the Distribution Licensee, where the Forum shall receive the Complaints. The Forum shall have sittings at such Principal Office and also at any other place in the area of supply of the Distribution Licensee as may be decided by the Forum or as the Commission may direct from time to time considering the number of complaints received, the place from where the Complaint is received and the proximity to the principal place of business of the Distribution Licensees and other relevant factors.
- (8) The Distribution Licensee shall give publicity of the constitution and existence of the Forum including in the bills raised for the supply of electricity to the consumers and in such other manner as the Commission may from time to time notify. The names and designation of the Members of the Forum and the concerned officers of the Forum, the address, e-mail, facsimile and phone numbers of the Forum shall be displayed at all the offices of the Distribution Licensee and shall also be duly publicised, if considered appropriate including in the bills raised on the Consumers.
- (9) The Forum shall maintain true and correct records of all Complaints received by the Forum from time to time and make available such records for inspection of the Commission as the Commission may require. Such records shall also be open for inspection by the consumers and others who are complainants as defined in this Act. Wherever required by the complainants the Forum shall acknowledge in writing the pendency of the complaint before the Forum.
- (10) The Distribution Licensee shall meet the costs and expenses of the Forum including the establishment and staff required to assist the Forum in the discharge of the functions under these Regulations.

- (11) A complaint handling procedure for the Forum shall be prescribed by the Distribution Licensee.

#### **CHAPTER – IV : OMBUDSMAN**

##### **(5) Appeal to Ombudsman:**

- (1) Any consumer if aggrieved by the non-redressal of the grievance by the Forum, may make a representation to the Ombudsman within thirty days from the date of the decision of the Forum or within thirty days from the date of the expiry of the period within which the Forum was required to take decision and communicate the same to the Complainant.

Provided that the Ombudsman may entertain an appeal after the expiry of the said period of thirty days if the Ombudsman is satisfied that there was sufficient cause for not filing it within that period

- (2) The Ombudsman shall decide the representation, after providing the Complainant and the Distribution Licensee an opportunity of being heard.
- (3) (a) For the purpose of carrying out the functions, the Ombudsman may require the Distribution Licensee or any of the officials, representatives or agents of the Distribution Licensee including the Forum to furnish documents, books, information, data and details as may be required to decide the representation.
- (b) The Distribution Licensee and others mentioned above shall duly comply with such requirements of the Ombudsman.
- (4) (a) The Ombudsman shall decide the representation finally within three months from the date of the receipt of the Representation of the Complainant.
- (b) In the event the Representation is not decided within three months the Ombudsman shall record the reasons there for including the cost to be paid by the Distribution Licensee if the inability to decide within the time is attributable to the Distribution Licensee.
- (c) In case the delay is for reasons attributable to the Complainant the Ombudsman may reject the Representation.
- (5) The Distribution Licensee shall duly comply with and implement the decision of the Ombudsman.

**(6) Powers of Ombudsman:**

- (1) The Ombudsman may receive and consider all representations filed by the complainant for non-redressal of the grievance by the Forum under Sub-section (5) of Section 42 of the Act.
- (2) Notwithstanding the above, the Ombudsman shall not entertain any representation in regard to matter, which are subject matters of existing or proposed proceedings before the Commission or before any other authority including under Part X, XI, XII, XIV and XV of the Act.
- (3) The Ombudsman shall in the first instance act as conciliator in matters, which are the subject matter of representation filed.
- (4) Subject to the provisions of the Act and these Regulations the Ombudsman's decision whether the complaint is fit and proper for being considered by it or not, shall be final.
- (5) The Ombudsman shall adopt a procedure ensuring transparency and due compliance of the principles of natural justice and due process of law.
- (6) The Ombudsman shall dispose of a complaint fairly and equitably.

**(7) Recommendations made by the Ombudsman:**

- (1) When a complaint is settled, through conciliation of the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman shall make a recommendation which he thinks fair in the circumstances of the case. The copies of the recommendation shall be sent to the Consumer and the Distribution Licensee.
- (2) If the Consumer and the Distribution Licensee shall send a communication in writing within 15 days of the date of receipt of the recommendation confirming their acceptance of the recommendations made by the Ombudsman in full and final settlement of the complaint made.
- (3) On the receipt of the unconditional acceptance by both the consumer and the Distribution Licensee, the office of the Ombudsman shall duly record the same and dispose the representation.

**(8) Award:**

- (1) Where the complaint is not settled by agreement under Guidelines 7, the Ombudsman shall hear the parties and pass a speaking award with detailed reasoning the decision on the representation.

- (2) An Award shall be in writing and shall state the nature of the reliefs including monetary compensation, if any, the Complainant is entitled to as per the award.
- (3) A copy of the award shall be sent to the Consumer and the Distribution Licensee concerned.
- (4) The Consumer shall furnish to the Distribution Licensee within a period of one month from the date of receipt of the award or within such period the Ombudsman may allow for reasons to be recorded, a letter of acceptance that the award is in full and final settlement of his claim and complaint made.
- (5) The Distribution Licensee shall comply with the award within 15 days of the receipt of the acceptance letter under Clause (4) and it shall intimate the compliance to the Ombudsman.

**(9) Consequences of Non-Acceptance of Award:**

If the Consumer does not intimate the acceptance under Clause (4) of Section – 8 above, the Distribution Licensee shall not be required to implement the award.

**(10) Powers to Remove Difficulties:**

- (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to any of the provisions of these regulations, the Commission may, by general or special order, direct the Distribution Licensee, the Forum and the Ombudsman to take suitable action, not being inconsistent with the Electricity Act, 2003, which appears to the Commission to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of removing difficulties.
- (2) The licensee may make an application to the Commission and seek suitable orders to remove any difficulties that may arise in the establishment of the Forum as per these Guidelines or otherwise in the implementation of the guidelines.

**(11) Issue of Orders and Practice Directions:**

Subject to the provision of the Electricity Act, 2003, the Commission may from time to time issue orders and practice directions for the effective implementation of these Guidelines to be followed.

(12) **Power to Amend:**

The Commission may, at any time add, vary, alter, modify or amend any provision of these regulations.

(13) **Submissions of Reports to the Commission:**

- (1) The Forum and the Ombudsman each shall submit a quarterly report on the number of complaints received, redressed and pending within 15 days of the end of the quarter, to the Commission.
- (2) The Forum and the Ombudsman each shall also furnish to the commission, by 31<sup>st</sup> May every year, a report containing a general review of the activities of their offices during the preceding financial year and shall furnish such information as the Commission may require.

**SCHEDULE - I**

**COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE AND TIME LIMITS  
FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES  
(See Guidelines under Chapter – II)**

**(1) Interruption in power supply (Fuse-off call, etc.)**

- 1.1 In case of interruption of power supply for LT consumers, the complaint shall be registered with the Fuse-off Call Center / Fault Call Center/ Central Complaint Center / Junior Engineer of the Distribution Licensee along with name, address, consumer number, and a brief description of the complaint. The HT consumer complaints will be registered with the Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer of the Distribution Licensee.
- 1.2 The complaint may be made by telephone or personally and the concerned officer of the Distribution Licensee shall ensure prompt response and action. The official immediately on receiving the complaint shall register it and issue a Complaint Number.
- 1.3 The Table 1A below outlines the normal time limit for resolution of complaints:
- 1.4 Adherence of time limit for rendering the services under various nature of complaint mentioned below is subjected to the condition that Distribution Licensee is not prevented from doing so due to extraordinary situations like cyclone, flood, storm or any such occurrences not attributable to the Board/Licensee

**Table 1A**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Time Limit for Rendering the Service</b>
1	(a) Fuse-off /Fault Calls:	
	Cities/Towns	4 working hours
	Rural Areas	24 hours



**Procedure for resolution of complaint**

- 1.5 In case of non-resolution or unsatisfactory resolution of the complaint at Level I, officers mentioned in Para 1.1 above, the consumer may take his/her complaint to the officer at Level II mentioned in Table 1B below. Immediately on receipt of any complaint the officer shall not only take action to ensure restoration of supply on the same day, he will also investigate the reason of delay in providing service at level 1. Table 1B presents the procedure for lodging the complaints:

**Table 1B**

S. No.	Category of Consumers	Where to lodge complaint - Level I (Office of)	Next higher level for complaint – Level II (Office of)
1	Fuse-off calls, Line breakdowns, transformer failure, etc. of all LT consumers	Fuse off Call Centre / Fault Call Centre / Complaint Booth/ Central complaint centre / Junior Engineer	Assistant Engineer/ Assistant Executive Engineer/ Executive Engineer
2	HT consumers (all complaints)	Complaint Booth/ Central Complaint Centre	Executive Engineer/ Area Manager / Superintending Engineer

**(2) Voltage related complaints**

- 2.1 In case of low / high or erratic voltage condition for LT consumers, the complaint may be registered with the Fuse-off Call Center / Central Complaint Center / Junior Engineer of the Distribution Licensee along with name, address, consumer number, and a brief description of the complaint. The HT consumer complaints will be registered with the Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer.
- 2.2 The complaint may be made by telephone, by post or personally and the Distribution Licensee shall ensure prompt response and action. The official receiving the complaint shall register it in Form 1 and issue a Complaint Number. For postal complaints, the receipt shall be dispatched by the next working day.
- 2.3 The Table 2A below outlines the time limit for resolution of complaints:

**Table 2A**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Time Limit for Rendering the Service</b>
1.	In case high voltage is reported by consumer	6 hrs.
2.	In other cases (i) If no work is involved and only maintenance of line is required.  Cities/ Towns Rural areas	7 days 10 days
	(ii) If augmentation of system is required	120 days (Applicable only when the transmission voltage is within the prescribed limit)

**Procedure for resolution of complaint**

- 2.4 In case the problem is local in nature, the problem shall be resolved within 7 days in case of cities/ towns and 10 days in case of rural areas. In case of need for augmentation of the distribution line, transformer capacity or installation of capacitor, the timeframe for resolution shall be 120 days; the consumer shall be informed of the same in writing by the Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer.
- 2.5 In case of non-resolution, the consumer may take his complaint to the officer (level 2) as mentioned in the Table 2B below in form 2. The officer shall take immediate action on the same and shall inform the consumers about the reasons of delay and the time required to solve the problem. The officer shall provide this information to the consumer, in writing, within 7 days of receipt of complaint.

**Table 2B**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Category of Consumers</b>	<b>Where to lodge complaint – Level 1 (Office of)</b>	<b>Next higher level for complaint – Level 2 (Office of)</b>
1	LT consumers	Fuse off call center / Centralized complaint center / Junior Engineer	Assistant Engineer / Assistant Executive Engineer/ Executive Engineer

S. No.	Category of Consumers	Where to lodge complaint – Level 1  (Office of)	Next higher level for complaint – Level 2  (Office of)
2	HT consumers	Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer/ Fuse Call Centre/ Centralised Computer Centre	Executive Engineer / Assistant Executive Engineer/Superintending Engineer

### (3) Load shedding /scheduled outage

- 3.1 In case of load shedding or scheduled power cuts exceeding 12 hours of duration in a day or power cuts exceeds 25 hours in a week, the LT consumer may lodge a complaint with the Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer of the Distribution Licensee. The HT consumer shall register his complaint with the Assistant Engineer / Executive Engineer.
- 3.2 The complaint may be made by telephone, by post or personally for which a Complaint Number shall be provided. For postal complaints, the receipt shall be dispatched by the next working day. The concerned officer of the Distribution Licensee shall ensure prompt response and action and also ensure non-recurrence.
- 3.3 For scheduled power cuts, the consumers must be intimated at least 24 hours in advance through the print media, public address, electronic media and/or through telephone. The timing for the scheduled power cut must also be displayed on the notice board of the Distribution Center and the Fuse-off Call Center for the information of the consumer.
- 3.4 The duration of scheduled power cut must never exceed 12 hours, and supply should normally be restored before sun set.
- 3.5 The licensee should submit its plan of scheduled regular outages to the Commission for information..
- 3.6 Load shedding/scheduled outage: Load shedding arising out of forced outage of transmission/ distribution line and due to system contingencies may have to continue beyond sun set in a day under exceptional circumstances.

### Procedure for resolution of complaint

- 3.7 In case of non-resolution or unsatisfactory resolution of complaints the consumer may lodge a complaint with the officer at Level 2 as mentioned in the Table 3 below. The office, after investigating the case, shall intimate the consumer, in writing, the reason of delay, within 24 hours of receipt of complaint and take steps to correct the situation.

**Table 3**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Category of Consumers</b>	<b>Where to lodge complaint – Level 1  (Office of)</b>	<b>Next higher level for complaint – Level 2  (Office of)</b>
<b>1</b>	LT consumers	Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer	Assistant Engineer / Assistant Executive Engineer/ Executive Engineer
<b>2</b>	HT consumers	Assistant Executive Engineer / Executive Engineer	Superintending Engineer

**(4) Meter related complaints**

- 4.1 If the consumer suspects that his meter is faulty, he may record his complaint with the Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer in case of LT connection and with the Assistant Executive Engineer / Executive Engineer in case of HT connection. The complaint may be made over the telephone, by post or in person. The officer receiving the complaint must immediately issue a Complaint Number. For postal complaints, the receipt shall be dispatched by the next working day.
- 4.2 On receipt of the complaint, the initial inspection shall be done within 7 days of the complaint. The meter inspection shall be carried out on chargeable basis. The amount shall be payable by the consumer in the next energy bill. If the meter is found to be defective, the Distribution Licensee shall immediately undertake replacement as per time limit in Table 4A.
- 4.3 If on inspection, the Distribution Licensee finds that the meter is not defective and a replacement is not required, but the consumer is not satisfied with the finding, he may pay Meter Testing Charge and have the meter tested in the ASEB/Licensee laboratory in his presence. Alternately, the Distribution Licensee may install a check-meter in the consumer premises to check its accuracy.
- 4.4 The Table 4A below also provides the time limit for replacement of burnt meters. However, during inspection if it is found that the burning is a result of tampering of the meter or attached equipment, or if the seal is found broken, action will be taken against the consumer as per rules.

**Table 4A**

S. No.	Type of Service	Time Limit for Rendering the Service
1	<p><b>LT Consumers</b></p> <p>a) Preliminary checking of meter on receipt of consumer complaint</p> <p>Cities/ Towns</p> <p>Rural Area</p> <p>b) Replacement of Stopped/defective meters</p> <p><b>c) Replacement of Burnt meters:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cities/ Towns :</b></li> <li>(i) Where the burnt meter is not attributable due to tampering by the consumers</li> <li>(ii) Where the cost of the meter is recoverable from the consumer, written notice is to be given immediately but not later than 7 days of receipt of complaint.</li> <li>iii) Where the consumer is required to supply the metering equipment.</li> </ul>	<p>7 days.</p> <p>15 days.</p> <p>Within 15 days in urban areas &amp; within 30 days in rural areas</p> <p>7 days</p> <p>15 days after the receipt of payment.</p> <p>15 days after supply of metering equipment.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rural Area :</b></li> <li>(i) Where the burnt meter is not attributable due to tampering by the consumers</li> </ul>	<p>15 days</p>
	<li>(ii) Where the cost of the meter is recoverable from the consumer, written notice is to be given immediately but not later than 7 days of receipt of complaint.</li> <li>iii) Where the consumer is required to supply the metering equipment.</li>	<p>30 days after the receipt of payment.</p> <p>30 days after supply of metering equipment.</p>

S. No.	Type of Service	Time Limit for Rendering the Service
2	<b>H.T. Consumers</b>	
	(i) Replacement of stopped/defective meter or related equipments	7 days after receipt of complaint  (Subject to availability of equipment/ material. If procurement of meter is required, the meter should be arranged and installed within a period of three months)
	(ii) Where the cost of the meter is recoverable from the consumer, written notice is to be given immediately but not later than 7 days of receipt of complaint	15 days after the receipt of payment (Subject to availability of equipment/ material. If procurement of meter is required, the meter should be arranged and installed within a period of three months)
	iii) Where the consumer is required to supply the meter/equipment	30 days after delivery of metering equipment to Board/ Licensee's office.

#### Procedure for resolution of complaint

- 4.5 In case of non-resolution or unsatisfactory resolution of complaints within the timeframe mentioned above, the consumer may lodge a complaint with the Level 2 Officer mentioned in Table 4B below. The office, after investigating the case, shall intimate the consumer, in writing, the reason of delay, within the next working day and take steps to correct the situation in the next 10 days.

**Table 4B**

S. No.	Category of Consumers	Where to lodge complaint – Level 1 (Office of)	Next higher level for complaint – Level 2 (Office of)
1	LT consumers	Junior Engineer/Assistant Engineer	Assistant Executive Engineer / Executive Engineer
2	HT consumers	Assistant Engineer/Executive Engineer	Executive Engineer / Superintending Engineer

**(5) Electricity bill related complaints****Incorrect Bill**

- 5.1 In case of errors in the bill, the consumer may register his complaint in Form 1 with Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer in case of LT connection and Area Manager/ Superintendent Engineer in case of HT connection. The complaints may be made over the telephone, in person, or by post. For all complaints a Complaint Number with date of receipt of complaint will be issued and in case of postal complaints, the receipt shall be issued by the next working day.
- 5.2 The time limit for resolution of above complaints is provided in Table 5A. In such cases where an inspection of the meter is not required, the time limit presented in the Table 5A below shall apply.

**Table 5A**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Time Limit for Rendering the Service</b>
1.	<p>1. In case any additional information is not required to be collected</p> <p>In case any additional information is required to be collected:</p> <p>Urban areas</p> <p>Rural areas</p>	<p>Immediately (On the spot)</p> <p>3 days</p> <p>7 days</p>

The check readings taken during redressal of bill related complaints and replacement of meter should be posted correctly in the meter-reading card.

The same procedure shall be applicable for the cases of conversion of categories.

**5.3 Non receipt / delayed receipt of bill**

The Distribution Licensee shall intimate the consumer of the due date on which he will receive his energy bill and also the due date for payment of his bills. This will normally be the due date for all billing cycles for that consumer. In case the due date falls on a holiday in any month, the next working day shall be the due date for that month.

- 5.4 If a consumer wishes to have his bill sent to him by a mode other than the regular mode adopted by the Distribution Licensee he might intimate his desire to the Distribution Licensee, who will then ensure that bills are sent to the consumer by that mode. In such cases the additional charges will be borne by the consumer.
- 5.5 In case of non-receipt or delayed receipt of bill, the Consumer/Licensee shall take the following steps:

In case of non-receipt of bill within the due date (of receipt of bill) or 15 days of reading of meter, the consumer may contact the bill issuing office to collect the duplicate bill and arrange payment before the due date of payment. In case the licensee is not in a position to provide duplicate bill, the consumer shall pay on the basis of past average bill amount. In the event of non receipt of the bill the responsibility of the licensee and the consumers are summarized as below:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Responsibility of the consumer</b>	<b>Responsibility of the licensee</b>
1	In case of non-receipt of bill within the due date (of receipt of bill) or 15 days of reading of meter, the consumer may contact the bill issuing office to collect the duplicate bill and arrange payment before the due date of payment.	The licensee shall issue a duplicate bill promptly, free of charge.  The licensee shall investigate the cause of non-receipt of bill and take suitable steps to ensure that the consumer receives his electricity bills regularly thereafter.
2	In case the licensee is not in a position to provide duplicate bill, the consumer shall pay on the basis of past average bill amount.  The consumer, however, will be liable to pay delayed payment surcharge to the extent the amount paid is lesser than the actual billed amount.	Licensee shall accept payment on the basis of the past average.

- 5.6 Those consumers who repeatedly experience non receipt or delayed receipt of bills, may register their complaint of non-receipt/delayed receipt in Form 1

with Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer in case of LT connection and Area Manager / Superintendent Engineer in case of HT connection. Normally such complaints may be made only after outstanding dues are cleared.

- 5.7 The complaints may be made over the telephone, in person, or by post. For all complaints a Complaint Number will be issued and in case of postal complaints, the receipt shall be issued by the next working day.

#### **Procedure for resolution of complaint**

- 5.8 In case of non-resolution or unsatisfactory resolution of complaints within the time limit mentioned above, the consumer may lodge a complaint with the Level 2 officers mentioned in Table 5B below. The office, after investigating the case, shall intimate the consumer, in writing, the reason of delay, within the next working day and take steps to correct the situation in the next 7 days.

**Table 5B**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Category of Consumers</b>	<b>Where to lodge complaint – Level 1 (Office of)</b>	<b>Next higher level for complaint – Level 2 (Office of)</b>
1	All LT consumers	Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer	Assistant Engineer / Assistant Manager (Revenue) / Executive Engineer
2	All HT consumers	Area Manager / Superintending Engineer	Chief Engineer

#### **(6) Disconnection and Reconnection of power supply**

- 6.1 When a consumer fails in payment of any bill in full, without the approval of the authorized officer, by the due date, the service connection of the consumer will be liable to be disconnected on temporary basis as per section 56 of the Electricity Act 2003 (36 of 2003). Before disconnection of a consumer's installation, the licensee would serve a separate notice of fifteen clear days. Effort should be made that before disconnecting a domestic connection; an adult member of the family should be informed. If the proof of payment of dues is produced to the satisfaction of the Licensee's employee deputed for the purpose, the supply shall not be disconnected.
- 6.2 Consumers who suffer disconnections will have the right to appeal for reconnection as per procedure provided in this document.
- 6.3 In case of a disconnection being justified, the security deposit of the consumer will be adjusted to the extent of the consumer's arrear. In case it is found by

the Ombudsman that the disconnection is unjustified, the Licensee may be penalized and compensation may be awarded to the consumer.

- 6.4 Reconnection will be done within the time limit mentioned below as per Table 6A on receipt of due payment:

**Table 6A**

S. No.	Type of Service	Time Limit for Rendering the Service
1.	Reconnection after payment	
	a) Urban areas	24 hours
	b) Rural areas	48 hours

**Procedure for restoration of power supply**

- 6.5 In cases of incorrect disconnection and delays in reconnection, the consumer may lodge a complaint in Form 1 with the office (level 1) of the utility mentioned in the Table 6B below. Complaint may be registered over telephone or in person. In case of non-redressal or unsatisfactory redressal of complaints the consumer may approach the higher office (level 2) as mentioned in the Table 6B by registering his complaints. The office, after investigating the case, shall intimate the consumer, in writing, the reason of delay, within the next working day and take steps to correct the situation in the next 24 hours.

**Table 6B**

S. No.	Category of Consumers	Where to lodge complaint – Level 1 (Office of)	Next higher level for complaint – Level 2 (Office of)
1	All LT consumers	Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer	Executive Engineer
2	All HT consumers	Executive Engineer / Area Manager	Chief Engineer

**(7) Delay in providing new connection including enhancement or reduction of load**

- 7.1 All applications for new LT connections shall be received by the Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer. The Executive Engineer shall receive all

applications for the new HT connections and change of load. The application forms shall be available at the offices of the Distribution Licensee or on the website of the licensee.

- 7.2 The timeframe for activities to provide new connection including inspection of premises, information of charges to be paid and execution of the work after payment is provided in the Table 7A below.
- 7.3 Where the distance of the premises where service connection is required is more than 50.0 (fifty) meters away from the existing distribution main, such service connection shall be deemed as requiring the extension of distribution main.
- 7.4 Within the overall time limit allowed under the Act or fixed by the Commission, the recommended time limit given below for various types of services shall also apply to applications for change of connection point and change of establishment.

**Table 7A**

1.	<p><b>LT connection</b></p> <p>a) Notice of inspection on receipt of complete application</p> <p>b) Inspection after sending the notice</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">i. Urban areas</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">ii. Rural areas</p> <p>c) (i) Issue of demand note to the applicant for payment of estimated charges (if the extension work is not required and the connection is to be given from the existing network)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Urban areas</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Rural areas</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">(ii) Issue of demand note to the applicant for payment of estimated charges (if the a) extension work or b) enhancement of transformer capacity is required)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">For extension of LT network</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Urban areas</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Rural areas</p>	<p>3 working days</p> <p>5 working days</p> <p>7 days</p> <p>5 working days</p> <p>7 working days</p> <p>10 working days</p> <p>15 working days</p>
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	<p>For extension of Transformer Capacity</p> <p>a) Urban areas</p> <p>b) Rural areas</p> <p>d) Commencement of supply</p> <p>(i) After payment of necessary charges (if the connection is required to be given from existing network)</p> <p>a) Urban areas</p> <p>b) Rural areas</p> <p>(ii) After payment of necessary charges (if a)extension work or b)enhancement in transformer capacity is required)</p> <p>a) If extension of LT line is required</p> <p>I) All connections excluding agriculture</p> <p>II) Agricultural connection with approachable roads</p> <p>III) Agricultural connection with no approachable road</p> <p>b) If enhancement of transformer capacity or new transformer is required</p> <p>I) All connections excluding agriculture</p> <p>II) Agricultural connection with approachable roads</p> <p>III) Agricultural connection with no approachable road</p>	<p>15 working days</p> <p>30 working days</p> <p>10 working days</p> <p>12 working days</p> <p>42 days</p> <p>60 days</p> <p>80 days, provided approach load is done by the applicant</p> <p>60 days</p> <p>60 days</p> <p>80 days, provided approach road is done by the applicant</p>
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2.	<p><b>High Tension Connection</b></p> <p>a) Informing feasibility after receipt of the application</p> <p>b) Issue of demand note of estimated charges (after issue of notice of feasibility)</p> <p>c) Release of connection after receipt of estimated charges</p> <p>    i. If no extension work is involved</p> <p>    ii. If extension work is involved</p>	<p>7 working days</p> <p>10 days</p> <p>10 days</p> <p>90 days</p>
3.	<p><b>Extra High Tension Connection</b></p> <p>a) Informing feasibility after receipt of the application</p> <p>b) Issue of demand note of estimate charges after issue of notice of feasibility</p> <p>c) Release of connection after receipt of estimate charges</p>	<p>10 working days</p> <p>30 days</p> <p>150 days (Since it will involve extension of line)</p>

7.5 In all cases when the licensee completes the extension work and is ready to give supply, the licensee shall serve a notice on the consumer to take power supply within thirty days. If the consumer fails to make arrangements to receive power supply within the notice period, the agreement shall come into force from the day following the end of the notice period, and thereafter the consumer shall be liable to pay any charges due as per the agreement. In the cases where the consumer is informed about non-feasibility of any of his requisitions the Board/ Licensee, the Customer may approach the Commission for necessary direction.

#### **Procedure for resolution of complaint**

7.6 In case action is not taken by the utility as per the time limit provided in the table above, the applicant may lodge a complaint in Form 1 with the office (level 1) mentioned below in Table 7B. Complaints may be lodged over telephone or in person. If still no action is taken within 7 working days, the applicant may lodge his complaint with higher office (level 2) as mentioned below. The office, after investigating the case, shall intimate the consumer, in writing, the reason of delay, within the next working day and take steps to correct the situation in the next 7 days.

Table 7B

S. No.	Category of Consumers	Where to lodge complaint – Level 1 (Office of)	Next higher level for complaint – Level 2 (Office of)
1	All LT consumers	Junior Engineer / Assistant Engineer	Assistant Engineer / Executive Engineer
2	All HT consumers	Superintending Engineer	Chief Engineer

7.7 In case the licensee delays in serving new connection (at variance from table 7A), he is liable to pay penalty to the consumer as per the decision of the Commission.

### (8) Other complaints

8.1 In case of complaints of a nature other than those covered above, for example complaint/ information on electricity theft, wastage of energy, misbehavior by Distribution Licensee personnel, irregular entry into consumer's premises by Distribution Licensee employees into consumer premises etc., those may be registered with the office of the Assistant Engineer / Executive Engineer / Superintendent Engineer. The complaint may be made by telephone, by post or personally for which a Complaint Number shall be provided. For postal complaints, the receipt shall be dispatched by the next working day. The concerned officer of the Distribution Licensee shall ensure prompt response and action and also ensure non-recurrence.

8.2 The time limit for resolution of such a complaint would normally not exceed 15 days and a written reply shall be made along with resolution of the complaint.

### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

To ensure that these Guidelines is put in place and action taken accordingly, the following steps will be taken by the Distribution Licensee:

#### (1) Consumer Grievance Register:

All information regarding complaints received at the respective office and their redressal shall be maintained in a "Consumer Grievance Register" in the specified format at all Distribution Centers, Division Offices, Circle Offices and Chief Engineers' Offices and in the office of the forum.

#### (2) Monthly Report:

The higher officers shall review the above "Consumer Grievance Register" fortnightly and records shall be maintained in a Monthly Report in specified format. The Inspecting Officer shall also review the above register of complaints and follow-up action from time to time. A synopsis of the format,

represented circle wise, shall be posted on the websites of the Companies. The progress of the resolution of complaints by the Forum shall also be posted on the website of the licensee every month.

**(3) Complaint Monitoring Cell:**

There shall be a separate Complaint Monitoring Cell in the offices of the Executive Engineer, Superintendent Engineer, Chief Engineer and the Chief Executive. This Cell shall maintain the records of delay in providing service to consumers and monitor actions taken to redress complaints and take remedial action if necessary.

**(4) Daily Report:**

Information on the following parameters shall be reported to the Complaint Monitoring Cell in the office of the concerned Chief Engineer and the Chief Executive daily:

Number of problems of interruption of power / Fuse-off / Fault calls not attended to for more than 24 hours. This should be accompanied with a brief description of the issues involved.

Name of areas where load shedding / scheduled outage continued for more than 24 hours.

Number of cases where unauthorized entry into consumer's houses were reported.

**(5) Reasons for Non-redressal of Complaints:**

In case of failure by the notified officer to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the consumer within the specified time limit, he shall report the reasons for the failure to the Executive Engineer / Superintendent Engineer on a monthly basis.

**(6) Availability of Forms / Rules:**

The licensee will ensure the availability of the following items at all offices for the convenience of the consumers:

- a) Guidelines for Redressal of Consumer Grievance.
- b) Various forms for lodging of complaints.
- c) Application form for power supply.
- d) Seniority list for new connections.
- e) Electricity Supply Code
- f) Schedule of Miscellaneous Charge.

- g) Consumer Rights Statement.
- h) Approved Performance Standards.
- i) Applicable electricity tariff and surcharges/duties.
- j) Display of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of officers on the notice boards.
- k) Display of the office timings for bill collection on the notice boards.
- l) Display of the time schedule of the power cuts on the notice board.
- m) Display of target time-period within which the different types of problems will be resolved by the licensee.

**(7) Central Complaint Centre:**

The licensee shall establish Central Complaint Centre in due course where consumers should be able to lodge complaint through telephonic conversation or through the Internet. Licensee should make arrangements to acquire a single telephone number for the entire state where consumers can lodge complaint. The Central Complaint Centre will receive all the complaints of the licensee and will provide a token number to the complainant. The Central Complaint Centre shall thereafter initiate steps to process the complaint. The licensee may implement this facility first of all in cities and thereafter extend the same facility to the rural areas.

**(8) Infrastructure and Training:**

The Distribution Licensee shall ensure that all adequate infrastructure is put in place, to handle the complaint redressal mechanism and to ensure that all time limit are adhered to. It shall be the responsibility of the Distribution Licensee to ensure that there are adequate phone lines to take all complaint calls, that the complaint desk is manned at all times, that adequate training on telephone and personal etiquette is undertaken, that all necessary forms / rules / procedures etc are available at all times and all other necessary steps are taken to ensure that consumers have a good experience in their interaction with the officers / staff.

Form – 1  
Cost of Form – Re 1/-

**Registration of Grievance**  
**At Level 1**

Grievance No.& Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(To be provided by office)

Consumer No. : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name and address : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Telephone no. of complainant : \_\_\_\_\_

3. Type of problem	Interruption	Voltage	Load Shedding	Meter	Bill	Disconnection	New Connection	Others
Please tick the type of problem applicable								

4. Brief description of grievance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Any other information : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Date of complaint : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of complainant

----- Tear from here -----

**To be retained by consumer**

Complaint No.& Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(To be provided by office)

Consumer Number : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of consumer : \_\_\_\_\_

2- Brief description of complaint : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3- Target date to resolve grievance : \_\_\_\_\_ (To be provided by office)

Signature of staff receiving the application

Designation & Seal

(Please provide your complaint number in any future communications)

Form – 2  
Cost of Form – Re 1/-

**Grievance Registration at Level 2**

Grievance No.& Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(To be provided by office)

Consumer No. : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name and address : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Telephone No. of complainant : \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name of office (Level 1) where complaint was registered earlier: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Brief description of grievance : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Date on which complaint at Level 1 office was registered : \_\_\_\_\_

6. Grievance no. (given by licensee at level 1) : \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please attach copies of communication with level 1 office (Optional):

7. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of complainant

----- Tear from here -----

**To be retained by Consumer**

Complaint No.& Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(To be provided by office)

Consumer Number : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of consumer : \_\_\_\_\_

2- Brief description of complaint : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of staff receiving the  
application

Designation & Seal

(Please quote complaint number in future communications)

Name of office : \_\_\_\_\_

Place : \_\_\_\_\_

**Complaint Receiving Register**

Sr No	Date	Complaint No.	Name of complainant and his telephone number	Type of problem	Complaint forwarded to	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

**Monthly report on complaints received**

Sr No.	Sub-division office	Complaints at the beginning of the month (No)	No of complaints received during the month (No)	Complaints under column 3 that are resolved (No)	Complaints under column 4 that are resolved (No)	No of complaints pending at the end of the month					Remarks (including reasons for non-redressal of complaints)
						More than 6 months	3 to 6 months	1 to 3 months	For 1 month	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12