

# **PUNJAB STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

## **[UPTO DATE “CONSUMER COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE (CCHP)” INCORPORATING ALL FOUR AMENDMENTS]**

Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission approved the guidelines for handling of consumer grievances relating to supply of electricity by the distribution licensee in a transparent and expeditious manner as envisaged in clause 4 & 5(2) of the PSERC (Forum & Ombudsman) Regulations, 2005, as amended from time to time. This procedure called “Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure (CCHP)” was issued vide Notification No. PSERC/Secy./Regu. 88 dated 04.10.2013 published in Punjab Govt. Gaz. (Extra) dated 7.10.2013. Thereafter, following amendments in this procedure were notified;

- (i) The First amendment vide Notification No. PSERC/Secy./Regu.107 dated 16.09.2015, published in Punjab Govt. Gaz. (Extra) dated 16.9.2015;
- (ii) Second amendment vide Notification No. PSERC/Secy./Regu.115 dated 12.08.2016, published in Punjab Govt. Gaz. (Extra) dated 31.8.2018.

The Commission notified PSERC (Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2016 vide notification no. PSERC/Secy./Regu./117 dated 26.12.2016 repealing PSERC (Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2005, as amended from time to time. The Commission further amended the CCHP as per regulation 2.22 of the PSERC (Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2016, as under;

- (iii) Third amendment vide Notification No. PSERC/Secy./Regu.121 dated 14.06.2017, published in Punjab Govt. Gaz. (Extra) dated 15.6.2017;
- (iv) Fourth amendment vide Notification No. PSERC/Secy./Regu.131 dated 31.08.2018, published in Punjab Govt. Gaz. (Extra) dated 31.8.2018.

Now for the convenience of all the stakeholders, the consolidated CCHP incorporating all the four amendments has been compiled.

1. **Short Title:**

This procedure shall be called the “Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure (CCHP)”.

2. **Date of effect/commencement:**

This CCHP shall come into force on the date of their publication in the official gazette of the State.

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**Disclaimer:** Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of upto date consolidated CCHP are free from mistakes & errors. However, in the event of the discrepancies of consolidated CCHP with the CCHP & amendments thereof published in the Punjab Government Gazette, the contents of Gazette Notifications shall prevail.

### 3. **Nature of Complaints**

Consumer complaints may pertain to;

- Billing
- Metering
- Interruption/failure of power supply
- Voltage variations
- Load shedding/scheduled outages
- Disconnection/Reconnection
- Any other matter concerning supply of electricity

### 4. **Dispute Settlement Committees**

4.1 <sup>2</sup>[Complaints of general nature such as delay in release of service connection, delay in issue of first bill/subsequent bills, defects in meter/metering equipments, delay in replacement of defective/dead stop meters, failure of power supply, voltage variations, non-restoration of supply in case of interruption or outage/breakdown or disconnection or even after payment of dues by the consumer and other miscellaneous defaults will be disposed of primarily by the AE/AEE incharge of the sub-division. In case the complainant is not satisfied with the response or service is not rendered within the time frame stipulated in Annexure-1 of the Supply Code, the complainant shall have the right to approach the Divisional Dispute Settlement Committee (DDSC) for redressal of his complaint & also for payment of compensation on account of failure on the part of the Licensee to meet the Standards of Performance.

Provided that the consumer shall have the right to approach the Forum for redressal of grievances of consumer constituted under section 42(5) of the Act directly without approaching the DDSC.]

4.2 <sup>2</sup>[Complaints relating to the supply of electricity by distribution licensee involving monetary disputes arising due to wrong billing, application of wrong tariff or difference of service connection charges/general charges or security (consumption), overhauling of account due to defective/inaccurate metering, levy of voltage surcharge, billing of supplementary amount or any other charges except those arising on matters pertaining to Open Access granted under the Electricity Act, 2003 and Sections 126, 127, 135 to 140, 142, 143, 146, 152 and 161 of the

Act will be disposed of by the following Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) constituted by the distribution licensee in accordance with the guidelines provided in CCHP.

Provided that the consumer shall have the right to approach the Forum for redressal of grievances of consumer constituted under section 42(5) of the Act directly without approaching these DSCs.]

<sup>4</sup>[(i) **Zonal Dispute Settlement Committee(ZDSC)**

- |    |   |                  |
|----|---|------------------|
| a) | Chief Engineer/DS concerned   | Chairperson      |
| b) | One officer from Accounts & Finance cadre not below the rank of CAO/CA or of equivalent status  | Member           |
| c) | One officer of commercial wing not below the rank of Dy.CE/SE   | Member           |
| d) | Representative of industry (to be nominated by Director of Industry & Commerce, Punjab)   | Nominated Member |
| e) | Representative of the consumer organization(s) (to be nominated by the Divisional Commissioner in case where the Zone comprises of more than one district or Deputy Commissioner where the Zone comprises of one district only) | Nominated Member |

The Zonal Dispute Settlement Committee (ZDSC) will have the jurisdiction to dispose of the complaints involving monetary disputes of an amount exceeding Rs. Two lac (Rs. 2,00,000/-) and upto Rs. Five lac (Rs. 5,00,000/-) in each case. The cases involving monetary disputes of an amount exceeding Rs. Five lac shall be handled by Forum for Redressal of Consumer grievances constituted under section 42(5) of the Act. Provided that the cases already registered with CGRF before date of notification of 4<sup>th</sup> amendment to CCHP shall continue to be dealt with by CGRF.]

<sup>4</sup>[(ii) **Circle Dispute Settlement Committee (CDSC)**

- |    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| a) | Dy.Chief Engineer/Superintending Engineer (DS) concerned. | Chairperson |
|----|---|-------------|

- b) One officer from Accounts & Finance Cadre not below the rank of Dy.CAO/Dy.CA or of equivalent status. : Member
- c) One officer from Billing Section Not below the rank of Addl.SE /Sr.Xen. : Member
- d) Representatives of Industry ( to be Nominated by Director, Department of Industries and Commerce, Punjab). : Nominated Member

The Circle Dispute Settlement Committee will have the jurisdiction to dispose of the complaints involving monetary disputes of an amount exceeding Rs. Fifty Thousand (Rs. 50,000/-) and upto Rs. Two lac (Rs. 2,00,000/-) in each case. Provided that the cases already registered with ZDSCs before date of notification of 4<sup>th</sup> amendment to CCHP shall continue to be dealt with by respective ZDSCs, as the case may be.

**<sup>4</sup>[(iii) Divisional Dispute Settlement Committee (DDSC)]**

- a) Addl.SE/Sr.XEN (DS) concerned : Chairperson
- b) One officer from Accounts & Finance Cadre not below the rank of Accounts Officer. : Member
- c) XEN/AEE/AE to be designated by SE (DS) Circle from within the Circle. : Member

The Divisional Dispute Settlement Committee will have the jurisdiction to dispose of the complaints involving monetary disputes up to Rs. Fifty Thousand (₹50,000/) in each case. Provided that the cases already registered with CDSCs before date of notification of 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment to CCHP shall continue to be dealt with by respective CDSCs.

4.3 <sup>2</sup>[The distribution licensee may appoint a Presenting Officer for each of these Committees.

4.4 Each Committee will be serviced by a Nodal Officer to be so designated. The Committee may authorize the Presenting Officer to act as a Nodal Officer.]

## 5. Procedure for lodging complaints

(1)

(i) The aggrieved consumer shall submit his complaint to the Nodal Officer of the appropriate Committee, clearly stating;

- a) The name and address of the consumer, consumer account number, telephone/mobile number and e.mail address, if any;
- b) The name of the distribution licensee's office viz sub-division to which the complaint pertains;
- c) Brief description of the complaint alongwith copies of the relevant supporting documents, if any;
- d) The relief prayed for;
- e) That the same complaint is not pending or already decided by any other court, authority, or forum.

(ii) The Committee may seek any additional information and details from the complainant

(iii) Before submitting a complaint involving monetary dispute, the consumer shall be required to deposit following amount pending disposal of any dispute between him and the distribution licensee and attach a copy of the receipt with the complaint:

- a) **Disputed Current electricity bill amount (covered under Reg.35 of Supply Code):** Payment as per Regulation 35.1 of Supply Code Regulations, as amended from time to time.
- b) **Cases Other than that covered under (a) above:** 20% of the disputed amount other than the current bill amount.

(2) Complaints relating to interruption/failure of power supply shall be lodged by the consumers at the respective designated complaint centres of the distribution licensee either in person or over the telephone. The same will be entered in a data base to be maintained at the complaint centres by an authorized official of the distribution licensee who will give the complaint number to the complainant.

(3) Other complaints of general nature shall be made in writing to the officer incharge of the sub-division in the format enclosed as Annexure-1.

**6. Procedure for Redressal of Complaint(s)**

- 1) The complaint received from the consumer/prospective consumer by the Nodal Officer of the concerned Dispute Settlement Committee, will be duly taken on record and entered in the “Data base” to be maintained by the Committee.
  - 2) The receipt of complaint will be acknowledged by the Nodal Officer or any other Officer authorized by the Committee to act as such and the number and date of registration of the complaint will be intimated to the complainant along with the telephone numbers of the office of the Chairperson/Nodal Officer of the Committee and the next higher authority.
- 2(A) In case of non-admissibility of the grievance, a speaking Order shall be passed within 7 days of receipt of grievance, after giving an opportunity of hearing to the consumer.
- 3) The Committee may call for the relevant records along with comments of the concerned office, if considered necessary, on the complaint(s) of the consumer. Concerned officer of licensee shall furnish record/comments requisitioned by the Committee immediately (not later than 15 days) on receipt of such requisition, failing which the Committee shall proceed on the basis of the material available on the record.
  - 4) The Committee will give a reasonable opportunity to the consumer of being heard, in person or through an authorized representative and submit evidence in support of his complaint. The order will be made, in writing, on the basis of facts/circumstances on record as well as pleadings of the consumer/his representative and after taking into consideration the relevant provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003, rules/regulations framed by the Commission under the Act and orders/directions/guidelines issued by the Commission.
  - 5) Interest payable, on recoverable/refundable amount if any, by either party shall be as under:
    - i) Cases covered under 5(1) (iii) (a) above: as per Regulation 35.4 & 35.5 of Supply Code Regulations, as amended from time to time, as the case may be.
    - ii) Cases covered under 5(1) (iii) (b) above: at SBI Base Rate prevalent on 1<sup>st</sup> of April of the relevant financial year plus 2%.
  - 6) The speaking order shall be passed by the Committee within a reasonable time not exceeding 90 days and conveyed to the concerned office with instructions to

comply with the order, and/or issue the revised bill/advice within 15 days from the date of issue of the order.

Provided that the Committee shall record reasons in case of failure to dispose of the complaint within 90 days and intimate the same to the Commission.

- 7) A copy of the Order passed by the Committee shall be communicated directly to the concerned office of the licensee and to the complainant or his authorized representative in person or through registered post immediately but not later than 7 days of passing of the Order.
- 8) <sup>3</sup>[The quorum for ZDSCs shall be three members, out of which atleast two shall be members of the distribution licensee. The quorum for CDSCs/DDSCs shall be atleast two members of the distribution licensee. All the decisions shall be taken on the basis of majority of the members present and voting. In case of equality of votes on any issue, the Chairperson shall, in addition, have a casting vote.

For timely disposal of grievances:

- a) Committees shall hold hearings at least once in a month or more depending upon pendency of cases.
  - b) The Chairperson of the Committee shall co-ordinate and specify days and time for hearings to ensure availability of officers of Commercial/billing and Accounts wings, as the case may be.
  - c) Agenda for hearings shall be prepared in advance and due intimation in this regard to be sent to the aggrieved consumer as well as to the concerned office of the distribution licensee.
  - d) No adjournment shall be ordinarily granted unless sufficient cause is shown and reasons for grant of adjournment have been recorded in writing by the Committee.
  - e) Where the concerned officer/official of the distribution licensee or complainant (or its representative) fails to appear before the Committee on the date fixed for hearing on more than two occasions, the Committee may decide the grievance ex-parte.]
- 9) A nominated Member will certify that he has no personal interest in the complaint being considered. He will not be entitled to any travelling/incidental expenses for attending the meeting(s) and will make his own arrangements.

- 10) All Members including the nominated Members of the Committee shall be intimated regarding meetings of the Committee along with the list of complaints and agenda to be considered in the meeting.
- 11) The Committee will continue to function even if no Member is nominated by the Director of Industries, Divisional Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, as the case may be. The proceedings of the Committee will also not be affected in the event of any nominated Member not making himself/herself available during the meeting(s).
- 12) In case the consumer is unable to make payment as specified in clause 5(1)(iii) supra, the Chairperson of the Committee will be competent to fix the amount to be deposited before consideration of the case by the Committee.
- 13) The Committee shall not entertain a complaint for which any proceedings are pending before any court, authority or any other Forum established by law, or where a decree, award or a final order has already been passed by any competent court, authority or Forum.
- 14) The Chairperson of the Committee shall ensure maintenance of proper record of all the complaints received and disposed of. Pendency and disposal of cases by the Committee should be monitored regularly by the distribution licensee. Quarterly reports and age-wise analysis of cases be submitted to the Commission duly commented by the Director/Distribution of the licensee.
- 15) Complaints regarding interruption/failure of power supply etc. and those of general nature will be attended to/disposed of by the distribution licensee within the time limits as may be specified by the PSERC (Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007 as amended from time to time.

**7. Responsibility of the distribution licensee**

The Distribution Licensee shall;

- i) give wide publicity to the existence of the “Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure” by periodical press release, display on notice boards in the distribution sub-divisions or at the Complaint centres/Bill collection centres and such other means to make the public aware of the procedure;
- ii) make available an updated copy of the consumer complaint handling procedure as amended from time to time for inspection by members of the public during normal working hours; and



- iii) provide an updated copy of the aforesaid procedure revised from time to time to the consumers and any other person who requests for it at a reasonable price.

**8. Consumer’s right to approach the Forum**

A complainant aggrieved due to non-redressal of his complaint under the “Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure”, may approach the Forum established by the licensee under sub-section (5) of Section 42 of the Act read with “PSERC (Forum & Ombudsman) Regulations, 2005” as amended from time to time.

**9. Repeal and Saving**

- i) The PSPCL’s Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure, which was applicable from 01.08.2006, shall stand repealed from the date of commencement of these Guidelines/Procedures.
- ii) Notwithstanding such repeal, anything done or any action taken or purported to have been done or taken under the repealed CCHP shall be deemed to have been done or purported to have been done under these Guidelines/Procedures.

BY ORDERS OF THE COMMISSION

Sd/-

Secretary to the Commission

**FORMAT FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS**

**OF GENERAL NATURE**

1. Name of the complainant
2. Full address with telephone  
number, if any
3. Consumer A/c No.
4. Brief description of the complaint

Signatures of the complainant

Date :

Place :

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**Acknowledgement**

1. Complaint Receipt No.
2. Date of receipt
3. By whom received  
(Name & Designation)

Signatures of the authorized official of the licensee