

CONSUMER CHARTER AND GUIDE TO AVAIL VARIOUS SERVICES

STATEMENT OF RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS

The Consumer Charter is a synopsis of the rights of the consumers of electricity under the Electricity Act, 2003. The objective of the Charter is:

- i. To empower the consumers by creating an awareness about their rights.
- ii. To create an awareness regarding the services available to the consumers and the time period within which such services are required to be provided by the distribution licensee.
- iii. To apprise the consumers regarding the Minimum Standards of Performance which a distribution licensee shall maintain to provide efficient, reliable, quality power supply and the compensation which is payable to the consumers in case of violation of these Standards.

Relevant provisions in this respect exist in the PSERC (Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2014, as amended from time to time (hereinafter referred as Supply Code, 2014), PSERC (Forum & Ombudsman) Regulations, 2016, as amended from time to time and Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure (CCHP) of the Licensee as approved by the Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission (the Commission) which are available on the Commission's website at www.pserc.gov.in and the distribution licensee's website at www.pspcl.in. A list of the Consumer Rights and various provisions of the relevant regulations/rules/procedure are detailed in the ensuing paragraphs for the ready reference of the consumers.

(1) RIGHT TO KNOW:

- (a) Consumers have the following basic rights in matters related to electricity supply.
 - i. Right to know the procedure for obtaining a new connection, extension/ reduction in load/demand, change of name, transfer of ownership.
 - ii. Right to know about the procedure for payment of electricity bills, resolution of disputed bill, disconnection and reconnection of premises.
 - iii. Right to know about the General Conditions of Tariff, Tariff Schedules and Schedule of General Charges approved by the Commission.
 - iv. Right to know that the meter for recording his consumption is accurate and know the procedure for replacement of defective/inaccurate/ burnt/stolen meter.
 - v. Right to know about the Minimum Standards of Performance which a distribution licensee shall maintain and the compensation which is payable to the consumer in case of violation of these Standards.
 - vi. Right to know about the Grievance Redressal Mechanism.

- (b) It is the duty of the Distribution Licensee to display information regarding Rules and Regulations applicable to the Supply of Electricity on its website and important billing related information at the bill collection centres. Consumers have the right to demand copies of the aforementioned Rules and Regulations at a reasonable price not exceeding the cost of its duplication from any Sub-divisional office of the Distribution Licensee(s). Consumers can also access the above documents from the website of the distribution licensee(s).

Regulations 15.11 A (e) (iii) and 15.11 B (e) (iii) of Appendix 3 A of PSERC (Conduct of Business Regulations) 2005 and Para 7 (iii) of Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure are relevant in this regard.

(2) PROCEDURE FOR GETTING NEW CONNECTION:

- a) An Application & Agreement (A&A) form (free of cost) for obtaining new connection is to be filed by the applicant as per the provisions of [Regulation 5.1 of the Supply Code, 2014](#). This form can be obtained from the local office or can be downloaded from the website of the distribution licensee.
- b) The connected load of his premises is to be calculated as per the provisions of [Regulation 4.5 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- c) The A&A form has to be registered after submitting the documents as per the provisions of [Regulation 6.4 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- d) After receipt of the application complete in all respect, the consumer will be informed through a demand notice by the distribution licensee. The demand notice has to be issued within the time period specified in [Regulation 6.8.4 of the Supply Code, 2014](#) informing the applicant about various charges to be deposited and other terms & conditions specified in [Regulation 6.8.3 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- e) The period of the demand notice can be extended as per the provisions of [Regulation 6.8.7 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- f) The distribution licensee shall provide supply of electricity to premises pursuant to the compliance of the demand notice within the time period stipulated in [Regulation 8 of the Supply Code 2014](#).
- g) The applicant will receive prior intimation regarding the visit/entry into their premises by an authorized representative of the Distribution Licensee(s) as per the provisions of [Regulation 39 of Supply Code 2014](#).

(3) METERING:

- a) The distribution licensee(s) shall supply the meter/metering equipment to the applicant at the time of release of a new connection or at any other time as specified and the consumer shall pay monthly rental to the licensee as approved by the Commission.

- b) The applicant/consumer can opt to provide his own meter/metering equipment of the make & specifications approved by the distribution licensee as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.2.2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#). Information regarding the approved make of meters may be obtained from the website of the Licensee or from the concerned Sub Divisional offices of the Distribution Licensee.
- c) The consumer meter shall be installed by the distribution licensee either at the consumer's premises or outside as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.2.3 of the Supply Code, 2014](#). In case the licensee installs the meter outside the premises of the consumer then as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.2.4 of the Supply Code, 2014](#), the licensee on a request from consumer shall provide a real time display unit at the premises of the consumer for his information to indicate the electricity consumed by the consumer.
- d) In case the meter is installed at the premises of the consumer, then the consumer, as far as circumstances permit must take precautions for the safety of the consumer meter which belongs to the licensee installed in his premises. The licensee shall be responsible for the safety of the consumer meter located outside the premises of the consumer and the consumer shall be responsible for the safety of the real time display unit installed by the licensee in consumer premises, as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.2.3 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- e) In case a meter is installed outside the premises of a consumer, the service cable from the outgoing terminals of the meter to Miniature Circuit Breaker/main switch installed at the consumer premises shall be provided by the distribution licensee at its own cost as per [Regulation 21.2.4 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- f) The distribution licensee shall have the right to test any consumer meter and related equipment, either at site or in the laboratory, if there is a reasonable doubt about its accuracy and the consumer shall co-operate with the distribution licensee in conducting the test. The consumer shall have the right to be present during such testing. A copy of the test results indicating the accuracy of the meter shall be provided to the consumer as per [Regulation 21.3.6\(a\) of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- g) A consumer may request the distribution licensee(s) to test the meter/ metering equipment, if there are doubts about its accuracy. The Licensee shall undertake testing either at site or in the laboratory within seven days on payment of fee as specified in the **Schedule of General Charges** approved by the Commission. The consumer has the right to receive a copy of the Test Results as per the provisions of [Regulations 21.3.6\(b\) of the Supply Code, 2014](#).

- h) If after testing, the meter is found to be inaccurate then the fee deposited will be refunded by adjustment in the electricity bills for the immediately succeeding months. In case the meter is found to be correct then such fee will be forfeited by the distribution licensee as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.3.6\(c\) of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- i) In case of testing of a meter removed from the consumer premises in the distribution licensee's laboratory, the consumer would be informed of the proposed date of testing through a notice at least three (3) days in advance. The testing shall be undertaken in the laboratory of the distribution licensee or any accredited laboratory within fifteen (15) days from the date of removal of meter from consumer's premises in the presence of the consumer or his/her authorised representative as per the provisions of [Regulations 21.3.6\(e\) of the Supply Code, 2014](#). Such testing can be carried out by the distribution licensee in the absence of consumer if he/she fails to associate with testing even after issue of two registered reminders or he/she gives his/her written consent for such testing without his/her presence.
- j) In case a consumer's meter becomes defective/dead stop, a new tested meter shall be installed within 10 working days of the receipt of complaint or detection by the distribution licensee. In case the consumer meter gets burnt, a new meter shall be installed within 5 days. However, supply of electricity to the premises in such case shall be immediately restored even if direct supply is to be resorted to, till such time another tested meter is installed as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.4.1 of the Supply Code, 2014](#). If the meter is burnt due to reasons attributable to the consumer, the distribution licensee shall debit the cost of the meter to the consumer. In such cases the investigation report regarding reasons for damage to the meter must be supplied to the consumer within 30 days.
- k) In case where a meter installed at a consumer's premises is reported to have been stolen, FIR to this effect shall be lodged by the consumer. If the meter is installed outside the consumer premises, the distribution licensee shall lodge the FIR. The supply of electricity shall be immediately restored by the distribution licensee after verification of the complaint by installing another tested meter or by resorting to direct supply on consumer's request in case a meter is not available. The cost of the meter shall be recovered from the consumer through electricity bills of the immediately succeeding months, if the meter is installed in the premises of consumer. Where the stolen meter was installed outside the consumer premises, the cost of meter shall be borne by the distribution licensee, as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.4.2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- l) **Overhauling of Consumer Accounts:**
- (i) If a meter on testing is found to be inaccurate, the accounts of the consumer will be overhauled and the electricity charges shall be

computed in accordance with the test results as per the provisions of [Regulation 21.5.1 of Supply Code Regulations, 2014](#).

- (ii) In case of a defective/dead stop meter, the account of the consumer shall be overhauled for the period the meter remained defective/dead stop subject to a maximum period of six months. In case of burnt/stolen meter, where supply has been made direct, the account shall be overhauled for the period of direct supply subject to a maximum period of six month. The account shall be overhauled as per the procedure specified in [Regulation 21.5.2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).

(4) RECOVERY OF ELECTRICITY CHARGES FROM CONSUMER

- (i) The Distribution licensee may recover from a consumer any charges in respect of the supply of electricity as per **General Conditions of Tariff** and **Schedules of Tariff**. In addition, a consumer shall be liable to pay rent and/or other charges in respect of any electric meter or electrical plant provided by the distribution licensee as per **Schedule of General Charges**.
- (ii) The Consumers shall also be liable to pay the amounts chargeable by way of taxes, duties, octroi, cess etc. as may be levied by the State Government or any other competent authority.
- (iii) The Fixed Charges shall be payable by a consumer even if no electricity is actually consumed.

(5) BILLING

The consumer has the right

- a) to receive bills that shall inter-alia indicate various details such as Consumer account number, name & address, category, sanctioned load/demand, Status of meter, Supply Voltage, Reading dates along with readings, multiplying factor, the period of billing, Security (consumption) and Security(meter), the date of issue of bill, tariff rates, the due date of payment and the late payment surcharge, consumption in the last six months and corresponding month of previous year consumption as per provisions of [Annexure 7 to Supply Code, 2014](#). The bill shall also contain the information regarding the address and other details of the concerned collection centre, Consumer Complaint Centre, office of the Forum and Ombudsman along with phone numbers
- b) to receive bill-cum-notice for arrears in case of under assessment or the charges levied as a result of checking etc., separately indicating nature and period of the arrears along with calculation details of such arrears. Such charges shall not be clubbed with the current electricity bill as per the provisions of [Regulation 30.1.2 of Supply Code, 2014](#).

In case arrear bill is included in the current energy bill at the first instance, the distribution licensee shall not be entitled to take any punitive action against the consumer for non payment of such arrear amount along with the current energy bill.

- c) to receive bills with a periodicity as specified in [Regulation 30.3 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- d) to receive the bill immediately in case of spot billing and in other cases within a period not exceeding fifteen (15) days from the date of meter reading as specified in [Regulation 30.8 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- e) In the event of anticipated long absence, a consumer may deposit in advance an amount equivalent to Fixed Charges along with meter rentals or any other applicable charges for the period of absence as per the provisions of [Regulation 30.2.3 \(a\) of the supply Code, 2014](#).
- f) During the period a premises remained locked without intimation to distribution licensee, the consumer shall be billed in the manner specified in Regulation 21.5.2 of the Supply Code, 2014. When the meter is ultimately read, the bill shall be corrected on the basis of actual consumption **as per the provisions of [Regulation 30.2.3 \(c\) of the Supply Code, 2014](#)**.
- g) To receive on request a duplicate copy of the bill on payment of requisite fee as specified in Schedule of General Charges as per provisions of [Regulation 30.10 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- h) The distribution licensee shall issue the first bill for a new connection released during a billing cycle before the end of the next billing cycle. In case the distribution licensee fails to render the bill within the stipulated period, in such cases, on the request of the consumer, the recovery of amount of bill shall be made in interest free instalments without any surcharge as per the provisions of [Regulation 30.11 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- i) To get a special reading done at the time of change of occupancy with a notice of 15 days and pay the final bill as per the provisions of [Regulation 30.12 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- j) A consumer may deposit advance payment of future bills, which shall be adjusted in the succeeding months and receive interest on the advance payment as per the provisions of [Regulation 31.8 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- k) Pay the bill within 10 days from date of delivery of the bill in the case of Large Supply, Medium Supply, Small Power supply industrial consumers, DS/NRS consumers covered under spot billing and 15

days in case of all other category of consumers as per the provisions of [Regulation 31.1 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).

- l) Pay bill in cash, by cheque payable at par, banker's cheque, demand draft, bank transfer, e-banking/credit/debit card, RTGS, NEFT or any other approved digital mode as per the provisions of [Regulation 31.5 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- m) To receive interest from the Licensee on Security (consumption) and Security (Meter) at the rate and in the manner as specified in [Regulation 17 of Supply Code, 2014](#).

(6) DISCONNECTION/RESTORATION OF SUPPLY:

- a) Consumers have a right to receive a minimum of fifteen clear days' notice in writing before disconnection on account of default of payment as per the provisions of [Regulation 32 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- b) A consumer may seek reconnection where a distribution licensee has disconnected supply of electricity to his/her premises in consequence of a default within 6 months from the date of disconnection. The distribution licensee shall resume supply of electricity (other than theft cases) within twenty four (24) hours from the time the consumer fulfils the conditions specified in [Regulation 34.2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- c) A consumer may seek reconnection where a distribution licensee has disconnected supply of electricity to his/her premises in consequence of a default for more than 6 months from the date of disconnection but his service line/feeding line irrespective of voltage has not been dismantled. The connection may be reconnected by the distribution licensee after recovering the charges and after the consumer fulfils the conditions specified in [Regulation 34.3 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- d) A consumer may seek reconnection where a supply has been disconnected & the agreement has been terminated on his/her request as per [regulation 33.2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).but the service line/feeding line, irrespective of voltage, has not been dismantled. The connection may be reconnected by the distribution licensee after recovering the charges and after the consumer fulfils the conditions specified in [Regulation 34.4 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).

(7) Disputed Electricity Bill

- (i) In case of a dispute regarding current energy bill, a consumer may pay under protest:
 - a. An amount equal to the sum claimed from him; or

- b. the electricity charges for each month calculated on the basis of average charge for electricity paid by him during the preceding six months, whichever is less pending disposal of any dispute between him and the distribution licensee as per the provisions of [Regulation 35.1.1 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- (ii) The distribution licensee shall decide the dispute within 24 hours if no additional information is required and within seven days if additional information is required as per the provisions of [Regulation 35.1.2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- (iii) If the bill is found to be erroneous, a revised bill shall be issued to the consumer indicating a revised due date of payment, which shall not be earlier than seven days from the date of delivery of the revised bill to the consumer, as per the provisions of [Regulation 35.1.3 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- (iv) If the bill is found to be correct, the consumer shall be required to pay the balance amount, if any, along with additional charges for delayed payment from the due date, initially stipulated in the bill, as per the provisions of [Regulation 35.1.4 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- (v) In case the consumer is not satisfied with the decision of the distribution licensee, he may after effecting payment in terms of Regulation 35.1.1 seek redressal in accordance with the Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure &/or PSERC (Forum & Ombudsman) Regulations 2016 notified by the Commission.
- (vi) In cases other than current energy bill, a consumer can approach the Dispute Settlement Committee or the Forum by paying 20% of the disputed amount other than current energy bill as per Regulation 2.26 of the PSERC (Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2016, as amended from time to time.

(8) MINIMUM STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE OF DISTRIBUTION LICENSEE:

Consumers have a right to:

- (a) Receive service from the distribution licensee as per the Minimum Standards of Performance (SoP) specified in Regulation 22 read with Annexure-1 and Overall SoP as per [Annexure-2 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
- (b) Approach the Dispute Settlement Committee (DSCs)/Forum for determination of compensation as per Regulation 26 read with [Annexure-1 of the Supply Code, 2014](#), if the Licensee fails to meet the Standards specified in the Supply Code, 2014.

(9) COMPLAINT HANDLING AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM:

Consumers have the right:

- a) To receive copies of the rules and procedure for redressal of grievances namely Consumer Complaint Handling procedure (CCHP) approved by the Commission as well as PSERC (Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2016 notified by PSERC by paying reasonable price as per provisions of [Para 7\(iii\) of Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure](#), as amended from time to time.
- b) A consumer has the right to approach AE/AEE incharge of the sub-division to lodge complaints of general nature such as delay in release of service connection, delay in issue of first bill/subsequent bills, defects in meter/metering equipment, 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 as per [clause 4.1 of CCHP](#). 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, 2014](#), the complainant shall have the right to approach the Divisional Dispute Settlement Committee (DDSC) for redressal of his complaint or the Forum constituted under section 42(5) of the Act & also for payment of compensation on account of failure on the part of the Licensee to meet the Standards of Performance.
- c) In a case 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, the consumer may approach the concerned Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) constituted by the distribution licensee in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Commission Presently, as per [clause 4 of the CCHP](#), the monetary limits of DSCs are as under;
 - Disputed amount up to Rs. 50,000/- Divisional Dispute Settlement Committee
 - From Rs. 50,000/- to Rs. 2 lacs Circle Dispute Settlement Committee

- Above Rs. 2 lac to Rs. 5 lacs Zonal Dispute Settlement Committee

[NOTE: The cases involving monetary disputes of an amount exceeding Rs. Five Lac in each case shall be handled by the Forum.]

However, the consumer shall have the right to approach the Forum directly within 2 years from the date of cause of action for redressal of his/her grievances or within 2 months of the date of receipt of the order of DSC as per the provisions of [Regulation 2.23 and 2.25 of PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time.

Provided that the Forum may, for the reasons to be recorded in writing, entertain a complaint which does not meet aforesaid requirement.

- d) The consumer shall deposit the following amount with the distribution licensee as per [clause 5\(iii\) of CCHP/Regulation 2.26 of PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time before submitting a complaint involving monetary dispute to DSC or the Forum;
 - (i) In case the dispute concerns current energy bill;
 - An amount equal to the sum claimed from him; or
 - the electricity charges for each month calculated on the basis of average charge for electricity paid by him during the preceding six months, whichever is less pending disposal of any dispute between him and the distribution licensee as per the provisions of [Regulation 35 of the Supply Code, 2014](#).
 - (ii) In cases of dispute the other than Current Energy bill, a consumer shall deposit 20% of the disputed amount other than current energy bill.
- e) The DSC shall issue order within a reasonable time not exceeding 90 days and the distribution licensee shall implement the orders within 15 days from the date of issue of the order as per [clause 6\(6\) of CCHP](#).
- f) The Forum shall dispose of the complaint in 45 days as per the provisions of [Regulation 2.39 of the PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time. The distribution licensee shall implement the orders of the Forum within 21 days from the date of receipt of the orders failing which the consumer has the right to approach the Commission for initiating proceedings under section 142 of the Act against the distribution licensee as per the provisions of [Regulation 2.41 of the PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time.
- g) (i) A Complainant, as per the provisions of [Regulation 2.48 of PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time, may prefer a representation before the Ombudsman

appointed/designated by the Commission under sub-section (6) of section 42 of the Act, under the following two circumstances:

- if the Complainant is aggrieved by the non-redressal of the grievance by the Forum within the period specified, and
 - if the Complainant is aggrieved with the orders passed by the Forum.
- (ii) Such a representation may be made within 30 days from the date of receipt of the order of the Forum or expiration of 30 days after the time limit specified for issuance of the order, whichever is applicable, as per the provisions of [Regulation 2.49 of PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time.
- (iii) The person filing the representation shall deposit 40% of the amount assessed by the Forum (inclusive of the amount already deposited on this account) with the distribution licensee as per the provisions of [Regulation 3.18\(iii\) of PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time.
- (iv) The Ombudsman shall dispose of an appeal within the time period specified in [Regulation 3.25 of PSERC \(Forum and Ombudsman\) Regulations, 2016](#), as amended from time to time.