

# **CONSUMER CHARTER**

**PUNJAB STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
SCO NO. 220-221, SECTOR 34A, CHANDIGARH**

# **CONSUMER CHARTER**

## **STATEMENT OF RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS**

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

- i) To enable consumers by creating an awareness regarding their rights.
- ii) To build an awareness regarding the services available to consumers and the quality of service that may reasonably be expected from the electricity distribution licensee(s).

Relevant provisions in this respect exist in the Supply Code and Condition of Supply of the Licensee as approved by the Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission (PSERC) which are available on the Commission's website at [www.pserc.nic.in](http://www.pserc.nic.in) and the Licensee's website at [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in). A list of the Consumer Rights is detailed in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **1. RIGHT TO KNOW:**

- 1 Consumers have the following basic rights in matters related to electricity supply.
  - (i) **Right to know the procedure for obtaining a new connection, disconnection, reconnection, change in load/name/tariff category.**
  - (ii) **Right to know about the procedure for payment of Electricity bills.**
  - (iii) **Right to know about the tariff schedule and Schedule of General charges approved by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.**
  - (iv) **Right to know about the procedure of obtaining Open Access.**
  - (v) **Right to ensure that the meters installed at their premises are correct.**
  - (vi) **Right to know about the Standards of performance including quality to be maintained and services to be provided by the Distribution Licensee(s)**
  - (vii) **Right to know about the complaint handling procedure and Grievance Redressal Mechanism.**

2. It is the duty of the Distribution Licensee to display information regarding Rules and Regulations applicable to the Supply of Electricity at a bill collection centre. **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 electricity 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 8 (iii) of Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure are relevant in this regard.

## **II. PROCEDURE FOR GETTING NEW CONNECTION:**

Consumers have the right:

1. To receive application form(s) prescribed by the Licensee(s) for obtaining new connections on payment of fee as determined by the Commission. **(Regulation 5.1 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007}.**
2. To ensure that the Licensee effects supply of electricity to a premises pursuant to the submission of an application under Regulation 5 within the time period stipulated in **Regulation 6.3 of the PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**
3. To ensure that the Licensee(s), will after receipt of the application, inform the applicant through a demand notice of the Security ( Works) required to be deposited by the applicant and the other conditions to be met with by the applicant. **( Regulation 6.1 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007).**
4. To receive interest from the Licensee(s) on Security ( consumption)and Security ( Meter) at the SBI's long term PLR prevalent on 1<sup>st</sup> of April of the relevant year or as determined by the Commission. **( Regulation 17.1 and 19.3 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters)Regulations, 2007).**
5. To receive prior intimation regarding the visit/entry into their premises by an authorized representative of the Electricity Distribution Licensee(s) **Regulation 41 of PSERC (Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007).**
6. To demand proof of identity from representatives of the Distribution Licensee visiting their premises. **( Regulation 41 of ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007).**

### **III. METERS AND BILLING:**

1. The Licensee(s) will supply the meter/metering equipment to the applicant at the time of release of a new connection or at any other time as required by the consumer. The applicant may also obtain and install meter/metering equipment of his/her own choice provided it is of make(s) as approved by the Licensee(s) and after getting the same duly tested and sealed at the Licensee's laboratory. Information regarding the approved makes of meters may be obtained from the website of the Licensee or from the concerned Sub Divisional offices of the Distribution Licensee(s). (**Regulation 21.2(a) of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**).
2. A Consumer may request the Licensee(s) to test the meter/metering equipment, if there are doubts about its accuracy. The Licensee will undertake testing on site within seven days of payments of fee as specified in the Schedule of General Charges approved by the Commission. Consumers also have the right to receive a copy of the Test Result sheet. (**Regulations 21.4 (b) (i) and 21.4 (d) of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**).
3. If after testing, the meter is found to be defective 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 Licensee. (**Regulation 21.4 (b) (ii) of PSERC Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**).

#### **3A Overhauling of Consumer Accounts:**

If a meter on testing is found to be inaccurate, the accounts of the consumer will be overhauled and the electricity charges will be computed in accordance with the test results for a period of 6 months immediately preceding the

- a) date of test at site undertaken to the satisfaction of consumers or
- b) date of removal of defective meter for test in Licensee's laboratory where such testing is at the instance of the Licensee or
- c) date of receipt of request from consumer for testing the meter in the laboratory of Licensee(s)

Evidence provided by the consumer about working conditions and/or occupancy of concerned premises during said period having bearing on computation of electricity consumption will also be taken into

consideration.(**Regulation 21.4 (g) of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007**).

4. The consumer has the right to:
  - (a) Receive bills with such detailed particulars ( including due date for payment) as specified in the Electricity Supply Code with a periodicity of two months in respect of Domestic Supply & Non Resident Supply consumers with load less than 50 KW and monthly billing in respect of all other consumers categories.
  - (b) Receive bills that will disclose the periodicity of billing, date when the meter was read, the date of issue of bill, the due date of payment and the additional amount payable in case payment is delayed. (**Regulation 30 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007**).
  - (c) Receive bills with details, such as the address and phone number of the concerned collection centre, Consumer Complaint Centre, office of the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum and Electricity Ombudsman.
  - (d) Receive bills detailing mode of payment, tariff rates and consumption in the last six months. (**Annexure 7 to PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**).
  - (e) Receive on request a duplicate copy of the bill in case of loss of the original. ( **Regulation 30.10 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007**).
  - (f) Effect advance payment of future bills which will be adjusted in the succeeding months. ( **Regulation 32 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations, 2007**).

#### IV. DISCONNECTION AND RECONNECTION:

Consumers have a right:

1. To receive a minimum of fifteen clear days notice in writing before disconnection on account of default of payment. ( **Regulation 39.1 of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**). However, prior notice need not be given in cases where a consumer installation poses danger to the health or safety of other consumers or employees of the Distribution Licensee(s) or the public, and in cases of theft or unauthorized use of electricity.
2. To pay, during the pendency of a dispute between the consumer and a Licensee, 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 consumed during the preceding six months,

whichever is less.( **Regulation 35.1 (a) & (b) of PSERC ( Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**).

3. To restoration of supply within the period stipulated in the Supply Code if :-
  - a) Cause of disconnection is removed or rectified.
  - b) Payments of amounts due/prescribed charges are effected.( **Regulation 23.4(c) & Regulation 40 of PSERC (Electricity Supply Code & Related Matters) Regulations,2007**).

V. STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE OF ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION LICENSEE AND CONSUMER SERVICE CENTRE:

Consumers have a right to:

1. Receive service as per the Standards of Performance of the Electricity Distribution Licensee provided for in the Supply Code.
2. Approach the Commission for determination of compensation, if the Licensee fails to meet the Standards specified.  
( **Section 57 of the Electricity Act,2003** )

VI. COMPLAINT HANDLING AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL:

Consumers have the right:

1. To receive copies of the rules and procedures for redressal of grievances made by the Electricity Distribution Licensee as well as regulations notified by the PSERC under the provisions of **Section 42(5) and (7) of the Electricity Act, 2003**, by paying photocopying charges. ( **Para 8(iii) of Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure**).
2. Consumers with complaints of monetary nature such as wrong billing, application of wrong tariff, metering (except those arising in matters pertaining to Open Access/theft/unauthorized use) may file complaints with the Dispute Settlement Committee(s) as per following:
  - Disputed amount up to Rs. 50,000/-      Divisional Dispute Settlement Committee
  - Rs. 50,001/-to Rs. 2,00,000/-      Circle Dispute Settlement Committee
  - Above Rs. 2,00,000/-      Zonal Dispute Settlement Committee( **Para 4(1) of Consumers Complaint Handling Procedure approved by PSERC**)

3. Any complaint aggrieved by non redressal of his grievance under the Complaint Handling Procedure of the Licensee may himself or through his authorized representative, approach the Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum in writing for the redressal of his grievance. Inaction on the part of the prescribed authority within the stipulated time period shall also be treated as non redressal and appeal will lie before the Forum.( **Regulation 4 and 5(2) of PSERC(Forum & Ombudsman)Regulations, 2005**).
4. Any complaint aggrieved by orders of the Forum may prefer a representation before the Ombudsman within one month from the date of receipt of Order of the Forum.( **Regulation 7 (13) & 18 (3) of PSERC ( Forum & Ombudsman) Regulations,2005**).
5. Consumers have the right to know that
  - Dispute Settlement Committees (DSC's) are required to dispose of complaints within 60 days of complaint.
  - Forum is also required to dispose of an appeal within 60 days of filing of the complaint.
  - The Ombudsman is required to dispose of an appeal within three months from the date of receipt of representation.  
( **Para 6(6) of Consumer Complaint Handling Procedure, Regulations 7(6) & 19 (5) of PSERC( Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations,2005**).
6. Consumers may file complaints of general nature such as delay in release in service connection, delay in issue of first bill/subsequent bills, receipt of incorrect energy bills, defects in meter/metering equipments etc. with the concerned AE/AEE.  
( **Para 4(4) of Consumer Cpmplaint Handling Procedure approved by PSERC**).