



## ELECTRICITY DISCONNECTION AND RECONNECTION

### A CONSUMER GUIDE

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No consumer would like to get the electricity supply disconnected whatever be the reason. Because electricity is so essential that modern day life would be impossible without electricity. Nor the electricity supply companies (ESCOMS) or Distribution Licensees would like to disconnect power supply to the installation in the consumer premises. Yet in practice ESCOMS may resort to disconnect electricity supply due to various reasons. This doesn't mean that ESCOMS are at liberty to disrupt power supply to the consumer's installation. As per law any disconnection should be for a valid reason and the consumer is entitled to have advance knowledge of such disconnection. With a view to make this process transparent, the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission has specified the procedures for disconnection and reconnection. The procedure is contained in the KERC (Electricity Supply) Code, 2004, which is now part of the Conditions of Supply of Electricity of Distribution Licensees in the State of Karnataka. The main provisions of this procedure explained below.

The provisions relating to disconnection and reconnection may be grouped in the following headings:

- A. Circumstances under which electricity supply can be disconnected
- B. Prior notice about disconnection
- C. The procedure for reconnection

#### **A. When can the electricity supply can be disconnected**

Normally the distribution licensee shall not disconnect electricity supply to any consumer. However the Code permits such disconnection in the following circumstances.

1. When a consumer makes a request for disconnection
2. When the distribution licensee is being asked/directed to disconnect by a person with legal authority to issue such direction

3. When the agreement between the licensee and the consumer provides for such authority to the licensee to disconnect
4. If the licensee reasonably believes that the consumer has violated the provisions of the Code, which entitles the licensee to disconnect
5. The licensee may resort to disconnection when it believes that failure to disconnect may or likely to cause a health hazard or safety risk or damage to property or to the consumer or to any person
6. If the consumers' installation does not comply with the requirements of the applicable rules or any other reasonable requirements prescribed by the licensee, electricity supply may be disconnected
7. If the consumer has not paid the security deposit or is insufficient the electricity supply may be disconnected.
8. The consumer is required to pay the electricity bill as provided in the regulations. If the consumer fails to pay the bill, the licensee is empowered to disconnect electricity supply
9. If the consumer is found to have tampered with the electric plant, electric line or meter, the licensee may resort to disconnection
10. In case of dishonour of the payment instruments (cheque etc), of the consumer, the licensee may initiate action for disconnection for non-payment,

#### **B. Right to 'Not to be Disconnected'**

There are circumstances wherein dispute may arise as to the amount of the bill claimed by the licensee. The consumer has the right to question the amount of the bill. In such circumstances if the consumer deposits under protest an amount equal to the sum claimed from his or the electricity charges due from him calculated based on the average of past six months, whichever is less, the licensee cannot disconnect the electricity supply. In other words, pending the disposal of any dispute between the licensee and consumer, the licensee cannot disconnect electricity supply.

#### **C. Prior notice about disconnection**

Though the licensee has been given the authority to disconnect electricity supply, that authority cannot be exercised without following certain procedures. The object is to ensure that the licensee or its authorized representatives do not use their authority arbitrarily and put the consumer into difficult situation. The licensee should be fair, transparent and reasonable before resorting to such disconnection. Following are the steps to be followed before disconnection

- The licensee shall ensure that a notice is issued to the consumer in accordance with this Code/Supply Conditions. The notice shall be in writing and are expressed in plain language either in Kannada or in English.
- The notice should specify the reason and likely action by the licensee
- The notice should include a clause requesting the consumer to contact the local office of the licensee, if required.
- The notice should be sent by registered post, under certificate of posting, by courier or other similar means
- The notice can also be handed over in person residing at the consumers address
- The licensee can also affix the notice at a conspicuous part of the premises in case there is no person to whom the same can, with reasonable diligence, be delivered

### **Contents of the Notice**

In case the consumer has defaulted in payment of bills the licensee has to issue a notice to the consumer giving not less than 15 clear days notice after the due date. The notice shall contain the following:-

- The notice shall specify that the consumer has defaulted the payment of bills by the due date.
- The notice should intimate the consumer that failure to pay the amount due will entitle the licensee to disconnect or restrict the supply of service to the premises
- Outline the availability of payment options as per regulations
- Outline the installment option

### **D. Procedure for Reconnection**

A consumer whose installation is disconnected is entitled to get the electricity supply restored by way of reconnection. The Regulations provide for such reconnection.

If the electricity supply was disconnected due to non-payment of bills or shortage of security of deposit, the licensee shall reconnect the installation as soon as the consumer has paid the bill/deposit.

As per the KERC (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2004, the time given for reconnection is as follows:-

In cities and towns: On the same day of receipt of payment from the consumer

In rural areas: Within 24 hours of receipt of payment from the consumer

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**Note:** *The above guide is intended to inform the consumer and should not be considered as alternative to the relevant regulations. Consumers are required to consult the Conditions of Supply of Electricity of Distribution Licensees in the State of Karnataka as amended from time to time.*