

PRESS NOTE

NEW DIRECTIVES ISSUED BY KERC

The Commission in its Tariff Order dated 12th May, 2014 has issued the following new directives for compliance by the ESCOMs in the State:

i. Directive on Load shedding:

During the public hearings conducted by the Commission in different parts of the State, consumers across different sections have complained against frequent disruption in the supply of power particularly by way of unscheduled load shedding. Organisations representing industry and trade have pointed out that several small scale industries which do not have captive generation facility often suffer huge losses due to interruptions in power supply which results in loss of materials and man hours. Commercial and domestic consumers also suffer serious inconvenience due to frequent interruptions in power supply.

The Commission is aware that load shedding due to unforeseen outages of generation facilities resulting in reduction in the availability of power and due to constraints in the transmission and distribution networks, sometimes force the ESCOMs to resort to load shedding. However, it is necessary that load shedding is resorted to only in unavoidable circumstances after taking due care to anticipate and address likely shortages in the availability of power. The consumers likely to be affected by such load shedding should also be kept informed to minimise inconvenience to them.

In its Orders in OP No.26 of 2009 dated 26.8.2010, KERC had specified that load shedding for purposes of maintenance or for load management should be effected by ESCOMs by giving adequate notice to consumers through prior publication. The Commission also had advised ESCOMs on several occasions that load shedding should be done as far as possible on a rotation of feeders / substations to minimise the impact of load shedding on any area or section of consumers. In view of the continuing difficulties represented by consumers on account of unscheduled / unpublished load shedding, the Commission considers it necessary to issue fresh directives in the matter for minimizing inconvenience to consumers.

Among other things, the Commission has directed that:

- (1) Load shedding required for planned maintenance of transmission / distribution networks should be notified in daily newspapers at least 24 hours in advance for the information of consumers.
- (2) Where load shedding has to be resorted to due to unforeseen reduction in the availability of power, or for other reasons, consumers may be informed of the likely time of restoration of supply through SMS and other means.
- (3) Load shedding should be carried out in different substations / feeders to avoid frequent load shedding affecting the same substations / feeders.
- (4) ESCOMs should review the availability of power with respect to the projected demand for every month in the last week of the previous month and forecast any unavoidable load shedding after consulting other ESCOMs in the State about the possibility of inter-ESCOM load adjustment during the month.
- (5) ESCOMs shall submit to KERC their projections of availability and demand for power and any unavoidable load shedding for every succeeding month in the last week of the preceding month for approval.
- (6) ESCOMs shall also propose specific measures for minimizing load shedding by spot purchase of power in the power exchanges or bridging the gap by other means.

The Commission has directed the ESCOMs to make every effort to minimize inconvenience to consumers strictly complying with the above directions. Further, the Commission will review the compliance of directions on a monthly basis for appropriate orders.

ii. Directive on Establishing a 24x7 Fully Equipped Centralized Consumer Service Center for Redressal of Consumer Complaints.

During the public hearings held by the Commission, several Consumers have brought to the notice of the Commission that the Customer Call Centers established in ESCOMs are not functioning effectively resulting in delay in restoration of power supply after interruptions and attending to other complaints from consumers. The Commission is also of the view that establishing 24x7 fully equipped Centralized Consumer Call

Centers at the Headquarters of ESCOMs to improve the delivery of services is the need of the hour.

The ESCOMs are directed to put in place a 24x7 fully equipped Centralized Consumer Service Center at its headquarters with state of the art facility/system for receiving consumer complaints and monitoring their redressal so that electricity consumers in their area of supply are able to seek and obtain timely and efficient services / redressal in the matter of their grievances.

Every complaint shall be received on a helpline telephone number by the desk operator and registered with a docket number which shall be intimated to the Consumer. Thereafter, the complaints shall be transferred online /communicated to the concerned field staff for resolving the same. Such a system should also generate daily reports indicating the number/nature of complaints received, complaints attended, complaints pending and reasons for not attending to the complaints.

ESCOMs are directed to publish the details of the complaint handling procedure/Mechanism with contact numbers in the local media periodically for the information of the consumers. The compliance of the action taken in the matter is to be submitted to the Commission within two months from the date of this Order.

Further, the ESCOMs are directed to establish/strengthen 24x7 service stations, equipping them with separate vehicles & adequate line crew, safety kits and maintenance materials in all its Sub-Divisions including rural areas for effective redressal of consumer complaints.
