

How the Grievances are redressed- the procedural aspects

In terms of provision of section 42 of the Electricity Act 2003 Every Distribution Licensee shall within six months from the appointed date or grant of license whichever is earlier, establish a Forum for Redressal of Grievances of the consumer in accordance with the guide lines as may be specified by the State Commission. The Forum came into existence w.e.from Oct 2004 and accordingly functioning is commenced. Such Forums shall follow the principles of natural justice, includes, inter alias, the following

- i) It shall protect the interest of consumers.
- ii) It shall facilitate and expedite the redressal of grievances.

As regards procedural aspects are concerned the Set Mechanism, is having three-tier system i.e.

- 1) Internal Grievances Redressal Cell.
- 2) Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum.
- 3) Electricity Ombudsman.
- 4)

The first step is to approach to the appropriate office of the Distribution Licensee and then to approach or file the grievances under the presented Format 'Form X'. Having redressed or not and even if consumer is not satisfied with the remedy he should approach to CGRF under the prescribed format i.e. 'Form A' within 60 days from Date of Decision of IGRC.

The Forum shall not admit any Grievances unless it is filed within two (2) years from the date on which the cause of action has arisen. Grievances falling within the preview of any of the following provisions of the Act are excluded from the jurisdiction of the Forums

- a) Unauthorized use of electricity as provided under section 126 of the Act i.e. I.E. 2003.
- b) Offences and penalties as provided under section 135 to 139 of the Act.
- c) Accident in the distribution, supply of use of electricity as provided under section 161 of the Act; and
- d) Recovery of arrears where the bill amount is not disputed.

Every Grievances must be Submitted in writing to the Forum in the format set out in schedule 'A' of the Regulations of MERC in duplicate along with all the particulars, documentary evidences. Upon receipt of the prescribed format 'A', the Forum use to deliver the acknowledgement of receipt of Grievances to the consumer bearing a Sr. No. and date within five (5) working days from the date of receipt of Grievances by post and if submitted in person the acknowledgement is to be provided at the time of submission. The Forum further use to forward the copy of Grievances to the Nodal officer of Dist. Licenses along with the designated officer against whom (i.e. office) the grievances are filed. It is expected to receive the point wise reply within a period of 10 & 15 days under copy to consumer. The Forum further use to issue Notice for hearing to both the parties in writing giving sufficient time period. The consumer is supposed to argue the case or he may depute his Representative other than an Advocate to present the case and to do all or carry of the acts for the purposes. The Dist. Licensee may depute either Nodal officer or such other executives to represent the case. Upon personal hearing in case need arises Forum use to grant further such period for the submission or compliances as the case may be In view of the particulars fact of the case the Forum use to visit at site is order to verify the factual position of the case deputy Depending upon the issues involved in certain cases, case is to be posted for final hearing and then only findings of the Forum are to be delivered. The Forum calls this as to pass appropriate order. The time allowed is within maximum period of Two (2) Months from the date of receipt of the Grievances. Aggrieved by the order of this Forum, consumer can refer appeal with the Electrical Ombudsman having the office addressed at 606/608, Keshwa Building, Bandra –Kurla Complex Mumbai 51 within a period of 60 days under the prescribed Form 'B'.