

Before the
MAHARASHTRA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
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PRACTICE DIRECTION

**MEASURES TO MINIMISE PUBLIC INTERFACE IN VIEW OF CORONAVIRUS
EPIDEMIC (COVID-19)**

**MERC (ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CODE AND OTHER CONDITIONS OF SUPPLY)
REGULATIONS, 2005 (The Supply Code)**

26 March, 2020

Preamble:

The Commission is aware that all out efforts are afoot to contain the rapid spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic in the Country including Maharashtra. The Central Government and the State Government of Maharashtra have advised people to stay indoors and maintain social distancing. To ensure strict adherence to the advisory , the Government has imposed strict restrictions on the movement of general public.

Electricity being essential service, is exempted from such restriction and maintenance of uninterrupted power supply needs to be ensured by the Distribution licensee.

However, apart from maintaining continuous electricity supply, Distribution Licensee has to perform various consumer services such as meter reading, bill distribution, bill collection, redressal of consumer grievances etc which involves public interface. Further, all these activities are required to be performed as per procedure prescribed under MERC Supply Code Regulations, 2005 and within the timeline stipulated under MERC SoP Regulations, 2014.

TPC-D and AEML-D have informed the Commission that in view of COVID19, they may not be able to perform certain activities/duties as mandated in the MERC Supply Code Regulations, 2005 and MERC SoP Regulations, 2014.

Considering the critical situation and to ensure full implementation of the Government directives to ensure social distance in order control the spread of COVID-19 and in order to minimise public

interface of Distribution Licensee's personnel, the Commission deems it fit to provide certain relaxation in the Supply code to all the Distribution Licensees from performance of services which are not directly linked to maintaining continuity of power supply.

Accordingly, using its power vested under Regulation 22 of the MERC (Electricity Supply Code and Other Conditions of Supply) Regulations, 2005, the Commission issues following practice direction:

Practice Direction:

- a. Distribution Licensee shall ensure continuity of supply. Complaints related to restoration of supply as also the safety related complaints shall continue to be attended by Distribution Licensee.
- b. The Distribution Licensees may suspend other non-essential services which require visiting consumer premises or meeting consumer in person i.e. Meter reading, Billing, Offline Bill Collection at Bill Payment Centres, release of new connections etc.
- c. Wherever Automated Meter Reading facility is available, same shall be used for meter reading.
- d. In absence of Meter reading the Consumers shall be intimated through digital channels such as email, sms, mobile app about their estimated bill computed on average basis as per Supply Code Regulations.
- e. For bill payment, Distribution Licensee shall facilitate and update alternate payment modes i.e. digital payment mode.
- f. All the above measures shall be communicated through social media, electronic media and print media for wider publicity.

This Practice Direction shall remain in vogue till such time the Government's Order imposing restrictions on account of COVID-19 is in force.

Sd/-
(Mukesh Khullar)
Member

Sd/-
(I.M.Bohari)
Member