

CHAPTER – 9

DISHONEST ABSTRACTION, CONSUMPTION OR USE OF ENERGY

9.1 THEFT OF ELECTRICITY / ENERGY

(a) DIRECT THEFT OF ELECTRICITY BY REGISTERED / UN REGISTERED CONSUMER OF A MEPCO

- i. If a premises / person is found to be hooked directly with the **MEPCO** supply line by bypassing the metering equipment or if the consumer is using electricity direct from the **MEPCO**'s supply line and/ or the person living in the premises in not a consumer of **MEPCO**, then the **MEPCO** shall interalia process the case as THEFT of electricity. For all such cases the **MEPCO** shall register an FIR with the police. The FIR is to be registered by a responsible officer of the **MEPCO** not below the rank of Sub Divisional Officer.
- ii. All theft cases of direct hooking would be dealt by **MEPCO** directly in accordance with relevant clauses of Electricity Act 1910. The disconnection of electricity shall be carried out immediately under the supervision of Sub Divisional Officer of the area or any other authorized Officer of the **MEPCO**. The removed material shall be preserved as a proof of theft and the same shall be handed over to the police authorities while reporting to the police.
- iii. **MEPCO** shall be authorized to recover its losses by raising a detection bill as per its own procedure.

(b) ILLEGAL ABSTRACTION OF ELECTRICITY BY REGISTERED CONSUMERS.

The following indications shall leads to further investigations by **MEPCO** for illegal abstraction of electricity. For such cases the **MEPCO** shall observe the procedure as laid down under 9.1(c).

- i- Prize bond / postal order / meter security slip removed
- ii- Bond / terminal cover seal of the meter broken / bogus / tampered.
- iii- Terminal cover of the meter missing.
- iv- Holes made in the KWH meter bodies.
- v- MSB of the meter showing signs of tampering
- vi- Meter hanging loose / tilted / physically unbalanced
- vii- Meter glass broken.
- viii- Meter dead stop/ burnt.
- ix- Meter sticking.
- x- Meter digits upset.
- xi- Meter running reverse.
- xii- Meter connected on temporarily / permanently disconnected premises.
- xiii- Meter found missing at site.
- xiv- Mete found at site but no record exits in the office.

- xv- Any other means which can cause interference in true recording of
- xvi- quantum of energy (units) by the metering equipment.

(c) **Procedure for establishing illegal abstraction shall be as under:**

- 1) Upon knowledge of any of the items in 9.1(b), the concerned office of the **MEPCO** will act as follows:
 - i- Secure meter without removing it in the presence of the owner / occupier or his authorized representative /respectable person of the locality.
 - ii- Install check meter and declare it as billing meter.
 - iii- Shall constitute a raiding team including Magistrate, POL/E.I, Officer of **MEPCO** (in case of residential / commercial consumes not below the rank of SDO and in case of other consumers not below the rank of XEN) and an officer of the metering and testing division of the **MEPCO** (who should be an Electrical Engineer) inspect the meter secured at site and declare that illegal abstraction of electricity has, and / or is being carried out.
 - iv- Once confirmed that illegal abstraction is being done, serve notice to the consumer informing him of the allegations and the findings and the requirement of a written reply from the consumer.
 - v- Should wait for seven working days for receipt of reply.
 - vi- The reply to the notice shall be examined by the office higher in grade than the inspecting officer. If the reply is not convincing or if no reply is received or if the allegations as levied are proved, the inspecting office with the approval of the next higher office will immediately serve a detection bill for unclaimed energy limited to the period of three billing months or six months with the approval of CEO previous from the date of establishment of illegal abstraction as elaborated at 9.1(c) (3).
 - vii- The detection bill along with a disconnection notice for payment within seven days will be issued by the inspecting office.
 - viii- Upon payment of the detection bill, the tampered meter shall be replaced by the **MEPCO** at the cost of consumer and no further action will be taken by the **MEPCO**
 - ix- In case the consumer does not make payment and also does not dispute over the quantum of energy assessed, then after the expiry of the stipulated period his premises be disconnected and procedure for disconnection and reconnection as per Chapter 8 be followed thereafter.
- 2) The maximum period for charging in such cases shall be restricted to three billing cycles for general supply consumers i.e. A-I & A-II. For period beyond three billing cycles up to a maximum of six months is subject to approval of the Chief Executive of the **MEPCO**. Also for such cases action will also be initiated against the officer in charge for not being vigilant enough. For other consumer classes, the period of charging can be more than three billing cycles upto a maximum of six billing cycles.
- 3) If the consumer objects payment or disputes over the quantum of the units detected by the **MEPCO**, the appellant authority for revision of detection bill would be the review committee of the **MEPCO** headed by the next higher

officer. The consumer will also be given personal hearing by the review committee.

- 4) In case, the dispute remains unresolved even after exhaustive review, the **MEPCO** after getting approval of the Chief Executive Officer may lodge the F.I.R. The consumer may also approach a competent court of law under the relevant provisions of Electricity Act 1910.

Note: Mere occurrence of any the above defects in a meter does not warrant illegal abstraction of electricity. In cases sometimes, weathering effects and atmospheric conditions also wear out the postal orders, seals and other parts of the metering equipment. The detecting authority must be reasonable sure regarding the illegal abstraction happening before it actually decides to charge a consumer for the same. The same is true for the appellat forum as well. In addition in places where the meters are out side the premises, the prime responsibility of the maintenance of its healthy state of the meter rests with the **MEPCO**. A consumer shall not be charged if the meter wears out through normal atmospheric effects or through some internal fault in a meter for which a consumer be held responsible. For such cases the normal course of action on part of **MEPCO** should be to replace the meter with healthy meter. However, if the **MEPCO** feels that the quantum of energy lost because of malfunctioning of the metering equipment is more than ONE billing cycle then in such as case the **MEPCO** shall install a check meter in series with the impugned meter and declare the check meter as the billing meter. Difference between the consumption of the two meters to be recorded and the same may be charged to the consumer for a maximum of two billing cycles. However, it must be ensured that this would not be a DETECTION BILL.

See the Matrix at annexure-VIII