

Electricity Act, 2003

Section 135 - Theft of Electricity

²[(1) Whoever, dishonestly,--

- (a) taps, makes or causes to be made any connection with overhead, underground or under water lines or cables, or service wires, or service facilities of a licensee or supplier, as the case may be; or
- (b) tampers a meter, installs or uses a tampered meter, current reversing transformer, loop connection or any other device or method which interferes with accurate or proper registration, calibration or metering of electric current or otherwise results in a manner whereby electricity is stolen or wasted; or
- (c) damages or destroys an electric meter, apparatus, equipment, or wire or causes or allows any of them to be so damaged or destroyed as to interfere with the proper or accurate metering of electricity; or
- (d) uses electricity through a tampered meter; or
- (e) uses electricity for the purpose other than for which the usage of electricity was authorised,

so as to abstract or consume or use electricity shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both:

Provided that in a case where the load abstracted, consumed, or used or attempted abstraction or attempted consumption or attempted use--

- (i) does not exceed 10 kilowatt, the fine imposed on first conviction shall not be less than three times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity and in the event of second or subsequent conviction the fine imposed shall not be less than six times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity;
- (ii) exceeds 10 Kilowatt, the fine imposed on first conviction shall not be less than three times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity and in the event of second or subsequent conviction, the sentence shall be imprisonment for a term not less than six months, but which may extend to five years and with fine not less than six times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity:

Provided further that in the event of second and subsequent conviction of a person where the load abstracted, consumed, or used or attempted abstraction or attempted consumption or attempted use exceeds 10 kilowatt, such person shall also be debarred from getting any supply of electricity for a period which shall not be less than three months but may extend to two years and shall also be debarred from getting supply of electricity for that period from any other source or generating station:

Provided also that if it is provided that any artificial means or means not authorised by the Board or licensee or supplier, as the case may be, exist for the abstraction, consumption or use of electricity by the consumer, it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that any abstraction, consumption or use of electricity has been dishonestly caused by such consumer.

(1A) Without prejudice to the provisions of this Act, the licensee or supplier, as the case may be, may, upon detection of such theft of electricity, immediately disconnect the supply of electricity:

Provided that only such officer of the licensee or supplier, as authorised for the purpose by the Appropriate Commission or any other officer of the licensee or supplier, as the case may be, of the rank higher than the rank so authorised shall disconnect the supply line of electricity:

Provided further that such officer of the licensee or supplier, as the case may be, shall lodge a complaint in writing relating to the commission of such offence in police station having jurisdiction within twenty four hour from the time of such disconnect:

Provided also that the licensee or supplier, as the case may be, on deposit or payment of the assessed amount or electricity charges in accordance with the provisions of this Act, shall, without prejudice to the obligation to lodge the complaint as referred to in the second proviso to this clause., restore the supply line of electricity within forty-eight hours of such deposit or payment;]

(2) ³[Any officer of the licensee or supplier as the case may be, authorised] in this behalf by the State Government may--

(a) enter, inspect, break open and search any place or premises in which he has reason to believe that electricity¹[has been or is being], used unauthorisedly;

(b) search, seize and remove all such devices, instruments, wires and any other facilitator or article which¹[has been or is being], used for unauthorised use of electricity;

(c) examine or seize any books of account or documents which in his opinion shall be useful for or relevant to, any proceedings in respect of the offence under sub-section (1) and allow the person from whose custody such books of account or documents are seized to make copies thereof or take extracts therefrom in his presence.

(3) The occupant of the place of search or any person on his behalf shall remain present during the search and a list of all things seized in the course of such search shall be prepared and delivered to such occupant or person who shall sign the list:

PROVIDED that no inspection, search and seizure of any domestic places or domestic premises shall be carried out between sunset and sunrise except in the presence of an adult male member occupying such premises.

(4) The provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) relating to search and seizure shall apply, as far as may be, to searches and seizure under this Act.

1. Substituted for "has been , is being, or is likely to be, "by Electricity (Amdt.) Act, 2003 (57 of 2003), w.e.f. 27-1-2004 vide SO 119(E), dt. 27-1-2004.

2. Substituted by The Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2007, Dated 28.05.2007. Prior to Substitution it read as under:

(1) Whoever, dishonestly,--

(a) taps, makes or causes to be made any connection with overhead, underground or under water lines or cables, or service wires, or service facilities of a licensee; or

(b) tampers a meter, installs or uses a tampered meter, current reversing transformer, loop connection or any other device or method which interferes with accurate or proper registration, calibration or metering of electric current or otherwise results in a manner whereby electricity is stolen or wasted; or

(c) damages or destroys an electric meter, apparatus, equipment, or wire or causes or allows any of them to be so damaged or destroyed as to interfere with the proper or accurate metering of electricity,

so as to abstract or consume or use electricity shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both:

PROVIDED that in a case where the load abstracted, consumed, or used or attempted abstraction or attempted consumption or attempted use--

(i) does not exceed 10 kilowatt, the fine imposed on first conviction shall not be less than three times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity and in the event of second or subsequent conviction the fine imposed shall not be less than six times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity;

(ii) exceeds 10 kilowatt, the fine imposed on first conviction shall not be less than three times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity and in the event of second or subsequent conviction, the sentence shall be imprisonment for a term not less than six months but which may extend to five years and with fine not less than six times the financial gain on account of such theft of electricity:

PROVIDED FURTHER that if it is proved that any artificial means or means not authorised by the Board or licensee exist for the abstraction, consumption or use of electricity by the consumer, it shall be presumed, until the contrary is proved, that any abstraction, consumption or use of electricity has been dishonestly caused by such consumer.

3. Substituted for the words "Any officer authorised" by The Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2007, Dated 28.05.2007.
