

1st Draft
For Discussion Only

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

**RULES TO GOVERN THE INSTALLATION OR RELOCATION OF
RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC METERS BY DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES TO
ELEVATED METERING CENTERS OR INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC
METER TO OTHER ELEVATED SERVICE**

Pursuant to Article 11 of the Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers and Article 2.11.1 of the Distribution Services and Open Access Rules (DSOAR), the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) hereby promulgates the following rules, terms and conditions for the installation and relocation of residential electric meters by Distribution Utilities to elevated metering centers or individual residential electric meter to other elevated service.

ARTICLE I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Objective

The objective of these Rules is to provide guidance to Distribution Utilities (DUs) in the installation and relocation of electric meters to elevated metering centers (EMCs) or to other elevated service, in order to ensure their highest level of compliance with safety standards and adequate protection of the consumers' interests through the reduction of the DUs system losses.

1.2 Guiding Principles

DU shall ensure that installation and relocation of residential electric meters to the EMC or to other elevated service must conform with Republic Act No. 9136, other existing laws, rules, regulations and technical standards.

1.3 Scope

These Rules shall apply to all DUs and shall cover the installation and relocation of residential electric meters to elevated metering centers or individual residential electric meter to other elevated service as may be specifically provided herein. Billing disputes resulting from the installation or relocation of the meter to EMC services shall be governed by the ERC Rules of Practice and Procedure.

1.4 Definition of Terms

Act	Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001.
Billing Month	The elapsed time between two (2) succeeding meter readings, at least twenty eight (28) days apart but not to exceed thirty one (31) days.
Distribution Utility (DU)	Any electric cooperative, private corporation, government-owned utility or existing local government unit which has an exclusive franchise to operate a distribution system in accordance with its franchise and the Act.
DSOAR	Distribution Services and Open Access Rules promulgated by the ERC under Resolution No. 01, Series of 2006.
Elevated Metering Center (EMC)	The structure attached to DU poles or other structures on which a cluster of meters is installed.
EMC Service Drop	Includes wires between the EMC installation and the customer's old metering point or to the point where the metering location would have been placed had the customer not been in an EMC area.
Energy Regulatory	The independent and quasi-judicial

Commission (ERC)	regulatory agency created under Section 38 of the Act.
Line Loss	The component that is inherent in the electrical equipment, devices and conductors used in the physical delivery of electric energy. The term includes both load and non-load losses.
Magna Carta	Magna Carta for Residential Electricity Consumers including the Guidelines to Implement the Magna Carta issued by the ERC and any amendments thereto.
Service Drop	The overhead service conductors from the last pole or other aerial support including the splices, if any, connecting to the service entrance conductors at the building or other structure (Phil. Electrical Code).

ARTICLE II

GENERAL CRITERIA

2.1 Magna Carta Requirement

Under Article 11 of the Magna Carta, meters, as a general rule, shall be located in clean places free from vibration where they are easily accessible for reading and testing by both the DU and the consumer. Likewise, meters shall be located on the outside wall of the building or private pole and shall not be more than three (3) meters mounting height from the surface. However, the Magna Carta also allows meters to be located in other areas based on justifiable reasons, provided that the location is accessible to both the DU and the consumer.

2.2 Instances when elevated meters may be allowed

No meter shall be installed or relocated to elevated metering centers or other elevated service, except under the following circumstances:

2.2.1 Non-availability of right-of-way

Right-of-way is required by the DU to enable its personnel to respond to emergencies and complaints as well as to construct its distribution posts and other power distribution equipments. The DU shall exert utmost effort in acquiring such right-of-way. Prior to the elevation of the meters to EMC, the DU shall submit an explanation to the affected consumer as to its inability to secure the right-of-way.

2.2.2 Areas with informal settlers without title or rights over their occupied lands resulting to rampant illegal service connection, meter vandalism, and meter tampering

2.2.3 Consumer requests

Written requests from legitimate DU consumers for the elevation of services to metering centers because of frequent pilferage-related power interruptions, shall also be given due consideration. Provided, that said consumers represent at least fifty (50) percent of the total number of registered households in the area whose meters are proposed to be relocated, duly certified by the Office of the Mayor concerned.

ARTICLE III

REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 Cost of installations or relocations

The cost of installations and relocations shall be borne as follows:

- 3.1.1 For existing consumers whose meters are to be relocated to EMC installations, including relocation falling under Article 2.2.3 hereof, or relocation of existing individual consumer to elevated service, the DU shall shoulder the cost of relocation including the cost of service drop wires and all necessary conduits coming from the EMC frames down to the old metering point;

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- 3.1.2 For existing consumers whose meters are already relocated to EMC installations but whose expenses in acquiring service drop wires including all necessary conduits were borne by the consumers, the DU shall refund immediately the cost of such drop wires, upon presentation of proof of purchase.
- 3.1.3 For new consumers applying for service connections in areas served through EMCs, the DU shall shoulder the cost of the service drop wires from the EMC down to the point where the metering location would have been placed had the consumer not been in an EMC area. It is understood that these new consumers have complied with the requirements for new electric service connection.
- 3.1.4 For a new consumer whose meter is to be installed in an elevated service, the DU shall shoulder the cost of the service drop wires and all necessary conduits from the meter down to the point where the metering location would have been placed had the consumer not fallen in any of the acceptable circumstances enumerated in Article II hereof.
- 3.1.5 No other charges shall be required by the DU for new consumers applying for service connections in areas served through EMCs or for a new consumer whose meter is to be installed to an elevated service, other than those approved by the ERC.

3.2 Operating procedures

- 3.2.1 The length of the service drop wires shall not be more than one hundred thirty (130) meters from the EMC or other elevated service to the point where the metering location would have been placed had the consumer not been in an EMC area or in other elevated service.
- 3.2.2 The DU shall maintain the usefulness of the service drop wires from the EMC or other elevated service down to the point where the metering location would have been placed had the consumer not been in an EMC area or in other elevated service, including its replacement due to wear and tear.
- 3.2.3 Sagging of service drop wire/s shall not be greater than those allowed by the Philippine Electrical Code and the DSOAR.
- 3.2.4 The DU shall house or insulate the service drop wires or any individual service drop wire with a protective tube or material to protect the said wires from electricity theft/tampering.

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- 3.2.5 No more than ten (10) service drop wires shall be housed with a protective tube or material and not more than thirty (30) electric meters shall be installed per EMC frame.
- 3.2.6 The DU shall restore the electric service within twenty four (24) hours in case of outage due to the tripping action of protective devices during faults or the failure of primary distribution lines or transformers.
- 3.2.7 The DU shall coordinate with the concerned Local Government Unit (LGU) for the relocation site.
- 3.2.8 The DU shall, at all times, provide its consumer access to meter reading and testing.
- 3.2.9 Metering information should be made available to both the DU and the consumer. Relocation of meters in EMCs or other elevated service may be allowed provided that the DU adopts measures to allow consumers a means to verify the meter-reading information.
- 3.2.10 Before clustering or actual elevation of the meter/s, the DU must conduct an information campaign/forum in the affected area, or show proof, in case of individual consumer, on why there is a need to cluster or elevate the meter/s and the procedures to be adopted in implementing the same.
- 3.2.11 The DU shall conduct meter readings twice every billing month and shall prepare a monthly report on any abrupt change in kilowatthour consumption by a consumer. For this purpose, abrupt change in kilowatthour consumption means an increase by one hundred percent (100%) or decrease by fifty percent (50%) of consumption based on the average 12-month consumption immediately preceding the billing month in question.
- 3.2.12 Consumers in other elevated service shall witness the meter readings, or in the absence of such consumers, their appointed representative shall serve as the default witness to such meter readings.
- 3.2.13 Consumers in EMC areas shall designate a representative/s who will witness the meter readings, but in the absence of such representative, the Barangay Chairman or his/her appointed constituent shall serve as the default witness to such meter readings.
- 3.2.14 The consumer/s' representative/s must be duly informed of the conduct of the meter reading on a designated date and time at least two (2) days prior to the scheduled reading date. The consumer/s' representative/s shall have the option to be present at the time of the meter reading.

- 3.2.15 In reading the meters, the DU shall use either basket trucks to hoist the meter readers and the consumer/s' representative or high-resolution digital still or video cameras with zoom-in capabilities to capture the images of the meter/s showing distinctly the registration/s of the said meter/s.
- 3.2.16 If high resolution cameras are used, pictures of the meter showing the registration taken shall be kept by the DU for at least three (3) months after the reading date. In cases where the consumer questions the correctness of the readings, the DU shall allow the concerned consumer access to the meter-reading picture in question.
- 3.2.17 DUs shall issue meter reading cards that will be filled-up by the meter readers with the monthly readings, minus the line losses referred to in Article 5.1 hereof. The DU shall furnish the designated consumer or consumer representative the previous and present month's readings for each meter located at the affected EMC or other elevated service, except when the statement of account for that billing period is issued within two (2) days from such reading date. The DU shall likewise furnish the consumer/s' representative the pictures, if available, taken during the reading of the meter/s showing their registration.
- 3.2.18 The DU shall process requests involving relocation or new connection to an EMC service in a timely manner and shall not give preference or discriminate existing consumers or connection applicants based on the distance between the EMC service and the consumers' or applicant's premises.
- 3.2.19 Non-compliance by the DU with any of the foregoing procedures shall result in the relocation of the meters to the required height prescribed under the Magna Carta and the DSOAR.

ARTICLE IV

TECHNICAL STANDARD

4.1 Minimum technical standards

DUs shall conform with the minimum technical standards set by law, rules and regulations including the Philippine Electrical Code.

- 4.1.1 DUs shall ensure that the consumer's utilization voltage is within the variations set by Chapter 3.2.3.2 and Chapter 3.2.3.3 of the Philippine Distribution Code.
- 4.1.2 The DU shall ensure that the service drop wires shall have an adequate capacity for the load contracted by the consumer pursuant to the minimum standard set by Article 2.30.2.3(b) of the Philippine Electrical Code and are well insulated for wear and tear endurance and for protection from possible illegal tapping.
- 4.1.3 DUs shall install a system-operated automatic power shut-off in case of fire in the area served by an EMC.
- 4.1.4 DUs shall install a safety switch or circuit breaker with a size equal to the capacity of the service drop wires on a meter installed on other elevated service and on meters on EMC-service areas to isolate each meter from the other in case of short circuit or faulty connection at the load side. As such, all safety switches must be accessible to either the DU's personnel, the consumer/s or the consumer/s' appointed representative, in default thereof, a barangay official, provided that such safety switch or circuit breaker must be securely clustered near the EMC frame or secured from pedestrians, in case of a meter installed in other elevated service.
- 4.1.5 DUs shall bear the cost arising from any error in connecting the service drop wires from the meter in the EMC to the premises of another consumer other than the registered consumer.

ARTICLE V

TECHNICAL LOSSES

Line losses on the service drop wires beyond the one hundred thirty (130) meters length shall be borne by the DU. These losses shall be subtracted from the consumer's meter registration for the billing month. For purposes of computing line loss, the DU shall use the formula I^2R , where:

I^2 = current flowing on the wires

R = resistance of the conductors

ARTICLE VI

VIOLATION

A violation of any provision of this Rules shall be subject to penalty which the Commission, after giving the DU the opportunity to be heard, may impose in accordance with law.

ARTICLE VII

SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

If, for any reason, any provision of these Rules is declared unconstitutional or contrary to law, the other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

ARTICLE VIII

REPEALING CLAUSE

Provisions of the Magna Carta, rules, regulations, guidelines and other issuances not expressly revised by this Rules shall remain in force and effect.

ARTICLE IX
EFFECTIVITY

These Rules shall take effect on the fifteenth (15th) day following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the country.

Pasig City. _____, 2008

ZENAIDA G. CRUZ-DUCUT
Chairperson

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