

Draft

ANDHRA PRADESH ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Regulation No. of 2025]

**Fourth Amendment to the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission
(Electricity Supply Code) Regulation, 2004 (Regulation No. 5 of 2004)**

Introduction:

The erstwhile APERC (Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission) of the undivided Andhra Pradesh State notified the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (Electricity Supply Code) Regulation, 2004 (Regulation No.5 of 2004) (hereinafter referred to as 'the Principal Regulation') which was published in the AP Extraordinary Gazette on 17.03.2004. The erstwhile APERC notified the first amendment Regulation 2006 and second amendment Regulation (Regulation No.7 of 2013) to the Principal Regulation in the AP Extraordinary Gazette on 04.03.2006 and 07.08.2013, respectively.

And the newly constituted APERC for the residual State of Andhra Pradesh, which came into existence w.e.f. 01.08.2014, post bifurcation of the undivided AP State, adopted the above Regulations, among others, vide APERC (Adaption) Regulation, 2014 (Regulation No.4 of 2014). Subsequently, the new APERC notified the third amendment to the Principal Regulation (Regulation No. 3 of 2019) in the AP Extraordinary Gazette on 16.02.2019.

Whereas the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has issued amendments to the Central Electricity Authority (Installation and Operation of Meters) Regulations, 2006 through the CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2019, and the CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022. The 2019 amendment mandates that all new consumer meters must be Smart Meters with a prepayment feature and that the existing meters (excluding Smart Meters) must be replaced with Smart Meters with a prepayment feature within a timeline specified by the Central Government(Clause 4(1)(b)).

The 2022 amendment substitutes the the above Clause 4(1)(b) with the following:

- In areas with a communication network, all consumers must be supplied electricity through Smart Meters operating in prepayment mode, conforming to relevant Indian Standards (IS) within timelines specified by the Central Government.

- For consumer connections exceeding the current carrying capacity specified in the relevant IS, meters must have an automatic remote meter reading facility or be Smart Meters as per the relevant IS.
- In areas without a communication network, the installation of prepayment meters conforming to relevant IS will be permitted, as approved by the respective State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Whereas, the Ministry of Power(MOP) issued notifications dated 17.08.2021 specifying the timelines for the replacement of existing meters with smart meters.

Whereas, APDISCOMs, vide their letters, requested the Commission to make appropriate amendments to the General Terms and Conditions of Supply (GTSC) and the relevant Regulations notified by the Commission in the backdrop of the installation of Smart Meters.

After thoroughly examining the amendments to the CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) Regulations, MOP notification, APDISCOMs' requests, and other relevant aspects, the Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on it under sub-section (x) of Section 181(2) read with Section 50 of the Electricity Act, 2003 (36 of 2003) and all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby amends the Principal Regulation as follows.

1. Short title, Extent, and Commencement

- This Regulation shall be called the Fourth Amendment to Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (Electricity Supply Code) Regulation, 2004 (Regulation No 5 of 2004).
- This Regulation shall extend to the whole of the State of Andhra Pradesh.
- This Regulation shall come into force on the date of its publication in the Andhra Pradesh Gazette.

2. The following shall be inserted at the end of clause 3.3

“An e-wallet mechanism (INR settlement) shall be implemented for prepaid/smart metering services. Under this system, an e-wallet shall be created and linked to the electricity supply connection, allowing consumers to recharge periodically based on their energy requirements as per the applicable tariff. Recharges can be made through various options, including online portals, mobile apps, local retailers, and self-service kiosks. etc.”

3. The following clause shall be added after clause 4.1.5

“4.1.6 For smart meters, physical bills shall not be issued. Instead, e-bills shall be sent to the registered mobile numbers of consumers via mobile apps, SMS, and WhatsApp, or the bills shall be made available on DISCOMS’ web portals (English & Telugu language) or similar digital platforms. Consumers can update their mobile numbers through the Distribution Licensee's app, portal, or at designated offices or locations.”

4. The following shall be added at the end of clause 4.2

The Licensee shall provide bill information in English or Telugu on consumer request.

5. The following clause shall be added after clause 4.3.9

“4.3.10 For prepaid or smart meters, the first recharge for the month shall include the minimum charges, fixed/demand charges, customer charges, true-up charges, FPPCA charges, and any other applicable charge., The mandatory minimum first charge shall be Rs.500 or the sum of the charges mentioned before as informed by the DISCOMS, whichever is higher. Thereafter, the consumers can recharge their prepaid smart meter account in multiples of Rs.100 or any denomination specified by the Distribution Licensees, using the multi-recharge facilities/options provided by the Distribution Licensees. There shall be no maximum limit for the recharge amount. Any outstanding current consumption (CC) charge arrears as of smart meter installation shall be deducted from the first charge/recharge amount, duly taking care of the installments granted, if any.”

6. The following shall be added after clause 4.8.3

“4.8.4 For prepaid or smart meters, an emergency credit equivalent to his one-day average consumption shall be provided to consumers before disconnection. Disconnection shall occur only after the emergency credit is fully exhausted. The Consumers shall receive a minimum of three advance notifications or alerts before the balance in the e-wallet becomes zero.; the first when the balance reaches to three days average consumption, the second when the balance reaches to two days average consumption, and the final alert when the balance reaches to zero. These notifications will serve as a reminder to recharge the account, and the Distribution Licensee may temporarily disconnect the supply once the emergency credit is exhausted if the account is not recharged without issuing any further notice. Disconnections shall not take place during holidays or non-working hours.

The disconnection shall be scheduled only between 10 AM and 1 PM of the working day to allow the consumers to recharge their e-wallet from any channel if his mobile app/ e-device is not working for any reason. Post disconnection, consumers shall be notified through various channels, as mentioned in communicating the billing information about the zero/negative balance amount details.. The connection shall be permanently disconnected if the consumer fails to recharge within three months of temporary disconnection. In such cases, the meter shall be physically removed from the consumer's premises, and the e-wallet shall be deactivated. After permanent disconnection, a new connection to such consumer shall be extended as per the Rules/Regulations in vogue.”

7. The following shall be inserted at the end of clause 5

For prepaid or smart meters, the entire recharge process must be completed, and the recharge amount shall be reflected in the consumer's account within 15 minutes of a successful transaction. If a recharge is done after disconnection, the meter should automatically reconnect within 15 minutes of the successful transaction. Any complaints related to reconnection must be resolved within 4 hours.

(By Order of the Commission)

Place : Kurnool
Date : 01.01.2025.

Sd/- 01/01/2025
P.Krishna
Commission Secretary (i/c)