

## **DOCUMENT ON ELECTRICITY THEFT.**

### **What is Electricity Theft?**

Electricity theft is the deliberate and wilful criminal act of stealing electric power. More particular, it is any deliberate act by a consumer to cut down or reduce the total amount of tariff payable on electricity consumed, resulting in total or partial loss of revenue due to the utility provider.

### **Examples of electricity theft**

- Disconnecting or altering connection cables from the meter and connecting directly to the pole.
- The presence of a drilled hole on the glass cover of the electric meter, or at the back or any part of the meter
- The presence inside the electric meter of any elements which could result in the inaccurate registration of the meter's internal parts in order to prevent its accurate registration of energy consumption
- The existence of any wiring connection which affects the normal operation or registration of the electric meter
- The presence of a tampered, broken, or fake seal on the meter, or mutilated, altered, or tampered meter recording chart or graph
- The presence in any part of the premises or building which is subject to the control of the customer or on the electric meter, of a current reversing transformer, jumper or any other similar device.

### **Effects of Electricity Theft**

The offence of electricity theft is so rampant and escalating at an alarming rate and has emerged as one of Nigeria's greatest economic threat and a setback

to the gross domestic product (GDP). The power sector is threatened by widespread loss of revenue that would have helped to fund the value chain.

It is pertinent to note that in this era of low power generation- a matter beyond the control of the Discos, over 40% of the energy generated is dishonestly diverted and stolen by some disreputable individuals. **As a result of this, honest customers who actually pay for electricity do not get to enjoy it.** Even employers of labour and producers that grow the economy do not have enough electricity supply as a result of this.

### **Penalty**

It is important to note that **Section 286(2) of the Penal Code LFN 2004** states that “**whoever dishonestly abstracts, diverts, consumes or uses any electricity or electrical current is said to commit theft**”. It is also critical to note that this crime is punishable under **Section 287 of the Penal Code with imprisonment for a maximum term of five years or with a fine or with both fine and term of imprisonment.**

### **Who is the offender?**

- The registered owner of the meter;
- Anyone within direct control of the meter; or
- The occupant of the premises.

### **Precautions**

- Notify your electricity supplier immediately you discover an illegally connected consumer.
- Do not cut the seal on your meter base or tamper with your own meter for any reason.
- Apply for a legal connection if you do not have one.
- Remain aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to your electricity supplier.

- Ensure you notify AEDC of any changes between the registered users of the meter.

### **What is tampering?**

Tampering means to unlawfully disconnect, remove, damage, alter, meddle with or in any way whatsoever interfere with any electric fittings, meters or other appliances used for generating, transforming, converting, conveyancing, supplying or selling electricity.

Examples of tampering includes but not excluded to impeding the meter from making an accurate reading with the intent to obtain utility services without paying the full charge or to create false consumption information.

### **Penalty**

Under section 10 of the Miscellaneous Offences Act, **“any person who unlawfully disconnects, removes, damages, tampers, meddles with or in any way whatsoever interferes with any electric fittings, meters or other appliances used for supplying or selling electricity shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 21 years”**.

### **What is vandalism?**

This is the act of deliberate, mischievous or malicious destruction or damage of private property.

In this instance, it is the outright theft of any electric fittings, meters or other appliances used for generating, transforming, converting, conveyancing, supplying or selling electricity.

### **Problems and social effects of vandalism**

- a. Loss of lives in an attempt to carry out vandalization exercise;
- b. Increased power failure;
- c. Closure of many companies resulting from vandalization electrical connections to their locations;
- d. Hampers community development; and

e. Unnecessary replacement cost implication for the companies in the electricity industry.

**Penalty**

Under section **287 of the Penal Code, whoever commits theft shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with fine or with both.**

**Precaution**

Be security conscious and report any act or suspicious activity that jeopardises the public's supply of electricity to the authorities.

Being document communicated by Legal Services Function to the Corporate Communications Department.

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