

## Lesotho electricity bills

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Maseru, Mar.21; On the April 01, the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) will increase tariffs affecting both energy and maximum demand, with a 9.6286 percent rise for all customer categories and a 5.0 percent increase in the lifeline tariff.

She also highlighted the unavoidable hardship due to the inflation of electricity bills, foreseeing difficulties as their shop prices cannot be raised to balance these increased costs, ultimately affecting their business sustainability.

There are several perspectives from which the word 'customer' may be defined. The Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) defines a customer as any person supplied or required to be supplied with electricity and urban water and sewerage services. Therefore, LEWA recognises the importance of customers as stakeholders in regulatory processes. To fully participate in the regulation of services, customers must know their rights.

WASCO customers receive monthly consumption bills through the Short Message Service (SMS). Alternatively, the customers can search for their account information from the Company's website. The bills may reflect actual meter readings or estimates. WASCO customers are advised to ensure that meters can be easily accessed in clean areas and away from dogs or immovable structures. This will ensure that WASCO meter readers take actual consumption figures. For LEC, most domestic customers are on prepayment billing.

When for instance, a WASCO customer doubts the amount of billed service, they are advised to compare the meter readings against the one reflected on the bill. Differences in readings may occur. Sometimes, a customer's consumption may have increased between when WASCO reads the meter and when reconciliation happens. If wrong readings were taken or the meter malfunctioned, WASCO will reconcile the figures.

Customers have a responsibility to pay unsettled bills on time. In the UWSS subsector, WASCO can disconnect services within 10 working days after the due date for payment has lapsed. In the ESI, LEC can disconnect service within 5 working days after the due date for payment has expired. However, a customer has to be provided with written notice 2 days before a disconnection can be affected.

If customers are unsatisfied with the services rendered, they should lodge their complaints to the regulated entity (for instance, One Power, LEC or WASCO) in writing. After that, a customer should wait at least 2



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weeks for the complaint to be resolved. If a response is not provided on the complaint or resolved unsatisfactory, it should be escalated to the Authority for intervention.

Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) was established through the Lesotho Electricity Authority (LEA) Act. No. 12 of 2002 as amended. The Authority operates in line with the Government policy on electricity and water supply matters. LEWA is funded through License fees and customer levies.

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