

No. PR-3 /Damini Squad/01648

Date: 15/01/2010

COMMERCIAL CIRCULAR NO. 108

Sub: Formation of “**Damini Squad**” at Circle Level for cross checking and control of meter reading activities of Agencies.

Background:

The correct / actual meter reading is the most crucial activity for MSEDCL since this decides the energy that is consumed by the consumer and also decides revenue associated with it. Thus, the correct / actual meter reading, correct billing and revenue realization thereof is absolutely necessary. This inter alia culminates into consumers’ satisfaction as they are served with bill in consonance with their meter reading.

Initially meter reading was carried out by our own staff (Meter Readers). There after as number of consumers increased, the same was outsourced in some areas and various methods like conventional meter reading, spot billing, reading through RAM-CRAM machines etc. have been followed/adopted. The outsourcing was necessary since MSEDCL fell short on human resources as well as swelling number of consumers.

Even after continuing hybrid model of meter reading (Departmental and out sourced) ,at times either the meter reading were not taken in time or incorrect readings were taken, which resulted not only in loss of revenue due to delayed revenue realization but large consumer billing grievances. In many cases, it was found that the readings were entered by the agencies without actually going to the consumer’s premises. There have also been cases of meter readers giving bills in connivance with consumers.

To counter this aspect, Photo meter reading is started after issuing Commercial Circular No. 56 dated 21.06.2007 to ensure that the meter reader would actually visit the spot, take the photo which will be facsimily transferred on the bill. This methodology addressed many issues including the consumers’ grievances about wrong meter reading. As of now the work of photo meter reading is totally outsourced to agencies. It is also observed that these outsourced agencies err deliberately or otherwise in -

- 1) Not taking photo of the meter and showing LOCK/ RNA status.
- 2) Repeating the same facsimile,photo on other consumer’s bills.

Though all above actions deserve strict action on the agency there are hardly any instances where this has happened.

As such the main purpose of photo meter reading got defeated though to some extent. This is a very serious issue from the point of view of credibility of MSEDCL for no fault of MSEDCL and also from the point of view of adverse financial implications due to wrong billing. (These cases need to be detected & rectified during the validation process).

After introduction of photo meter reading, the percentage of "Actual Reading" has not improved as expected. There are still large number of complaints regarding actual reading bill not being issued to consumer. Hence it is absolutely necessary to have a quality counter check on meter reading agencies so as to minimize this menace. This will also provide the competent authority with a tool to discipline the agencies and our complacent staff.

MSEDCL has taken all out effort

- 1) to reduce commercial loss,
- 2) to undertake massive theft detection drives
- 3) to replace faulty, stop and old electromechanical meters which are more than 15 years in service.
- 4) to emphasize validation of bills before issue by arranging special meetings at the level of Director (Operations) and Director (Finance).

So as to have a proper billing system in place and to garner the legitimate revenue, MSEDCL has tried all possible avenues. This probably is due to lack of quality supervision on the outsourced agencies by our controlling staff.

The Competent Authority therefore has decided to have a quality counter check to some extent through a formation of a circle level squad named as "Damini" which will not only be headed by a lady engineer but her two/ three associates in a squad will be ladies.

These "All Ladies" squad will visit selected number of residential and commercial consumer premises and simply take down reading where the outsourced agencies has just finished their job of reading.

During the course of taking reading in case any irregularity from the point of view of Sec 126 or 135 is observed the same should be reported to concerned area incharge orally. The main aim of this squad is reading meters as a check over the work of meter readers employed by agencies

At present it is intended that there will be only one squad for each Circle. However depending upon density of consumers, geographical area and billing complaints, O & M Circle may have 2 squads. The necessity of second (additional) squad will be vetted by Regional Executive Director and approved by Director Operations within 15 days from the issue of this circular.

The Structure of "Damini Squad" and its working will be as under.

- 1) The "Damini Squad" shall be under the direct control of SE (O & M) Circle Office.
- 2) The Squad will be formed exclusively for cross checking of meter reading of Residential and Commercial category consumers at each Circle.

- 3) A lady Assistant Engineer / Junior Engineer will be In-charge of the Squad.
- 4) It is proposed to give absolute operational flexibility to the concerned SE and the Squad In Charge (Assistant Engineer / JE) and no intervention / monitoring is expected from Regional Executive Director or Zonal Chief Engineer except that they will see that the things are going in accordance with the spirit of this circular.
- 5) The Squad In-charge i.e. Assistant Engineer / Junior Engineer will work directly under SE and will only report to the concerned SE in the profarma "B" & "C" attached herewith.
- 6) Other members of squad will be qualified interns, 2 to 3 ladies having qualification as graduate / diploma engineers/ ITI certificate holders and will be outsourced to work under the Squad In-charge AE/ JE on purely daily wage basis. Also qualified members of Women Welfare Association, Mahila Mandal, NCC / NSS etc. can also be considered.
- 7) For outsourcing the squad members, Principal of colleges/institutions may be approached proactively by the Superintending Engineer (O&M) and the Assistant Engineer/ Junior Engineer (Squad In-charge).
- 8) Fixed amount of Rs. 300/- per day, per person will be paid to the outsourced ladies on weekly basis through Temporary Imprest. Expenditure for this squad will be booked under Seperate Account head which will be informed by accounts department.
- 9) Attendance / Work / Payment register is to be maintained by Squad In Charge for payment and for keeping separate record of the work carried out in the profarma "A" attached herewith.
- 10) Working hours of the Squad will be from 10.00 Hrs. to 16.00 Hrs daily (on working day). After 16.00 Hrs the Squad In-charge will feed the data to the billing software and the information will be reported to the concerned SE.
- 11) The Temporary Imprest shall be granted and closed at circle office only.
- 12) Two to three reputed make 8 Mega Pixel Digital Camera with upper limit of Rs. 6000/- shall be provided to the Squad by Circle Office.
- 13) Separate dedicated good condition vehicle will be provided to the Squad by Circle Office.
- 14) Security Guard with uniform shall be provided invariably to this squad by the Circle Office.
- 15) The Squad In-charge AE/ JE will be fully responsible only for cross checking of meter reading exclusively and will not be assigned any other work.
- 16) The aim of formation of this Squad is only to cross-check/monitor the meter reading and not detection of theft/ unauthorized extension etc. However incase they notice something they shall report the same to the Superintending Engineer.
- 17) As this squad is exclusively for cross checking of meter reading, it is expected that the maximum possible consumers in a PC will be checked during PC reading and data will be fed before printing of final bill.
- 18) Area of meter reading checking will be decided randomly as per the prerogative of concerned SE. Preferably, that area will be selected where meter reading programme is in progress.
- 19) During checking, if any abnormality / theft / illegal things are observed it may be intimated to concerned Field Officer. However, the services of the

- squad should not be availed and they should not be involved in further investigation / action in such cases.
- 20) Data feeding to billing software after 16.00 Hrs will be sole responsibility of squad in charge.
 - 21) Discrepancy observed in the meter reading must be immediately reported to the meter reading agency and as an exemplary punishment the meter reading agency shall terminate the concerned meter reader immediately from his job. The Superintending Engineer shall also decide if F.I.R of cheating should be filed against the meter reader.
 - 22) Meter reading agency should be penalized and warned for above lapses of its meter reader and action shall be initiated by following the procedure as per terms and conditions of the order.
 - 23) Concerned employee of the MSEDCL will also be held responsible for discrepancy observed by this squad. Action as per letter Dir(F)/3562/33897 dated 23.10.09 will be initiated in case of defaults.
 - 24) The Superintending Engineer must ensure that any discrepancy in meter reading noticed by this squad will be dealt with a heavy hand and maximum possible punishment should be given.
 - 25) This Squad will be operative for 3 Months only.
 - 26) The Squad In-charge must submit fortnightly report directly to SE concerned with copy to Director (Operations).
 - 27) The Squad In-charge AE/ JE shall invariably carry MSEDCL's authorized Identity Card while visiting the consumer's premises. Other members of the squad should not be issued any identity card.
 - 28) The Squad shall be made operative latest from 15th January, 2010 or even earlier wherever possible.
 - 29) Experience Certificate will be issued to the outsourced members to the satisfaction of the AE / JE working with the Squad after successful completion of the task (entire work).
 - 30) Superintending Engineer may suggest incentive if any, for the Squad where they have out performed with surprising fruitful results.

The above instructions are not exhaustive; any suitable addition which will ultimately benefit MSEDCL may be incorporated suitably while implementing the programme.

All other activities i.e. percentage checking by regular staff, theft drive, validation etc. should be carried out as per normal practice and service of the squad should not at all be utilized for such works.

The performance of the squad should be evaluated based on the total expenditure incurred for the squad and the debit / credit value of the bills revised due to checking.

All are directed to follow this circular strictly.

Encl: Proforma "A", "B" & "C"


Chief Engineer (Commercial)

Copy : As per mailing list.

Register to be maintained date wise

- a) Date : _____
- b) Name of area checked : _____ PC No : _____
- c) Details of Team Members : Name of Squad In charge ----- JE _____

Sr. No.	Name of Member	Qualification	Address with Contact No.
1			
2			
3			

- d) Total No. of connection checked (Residential + Commercial) = _____ Nos.
- e) Discrepancies observed in (Residential + Commercial) = _____ Nos.
- f) Difference in consumer's bill : _____

Credit bill cases		Debit bill cases	
Nos.	Amount in Rs.	Nos.	Amount in Rs.

- g) Payment made to outsourced team members:

Sr.No.	Name	No. of working days	Amount paid in Rs.	Signature of member
1				
2				
3				

Signature of
Squad In charge

Daily Report: - To be submitted to SE

- a) Date :
b) Name of area checked :
c) PC No. :
d) No of consumer checked :

Sr.No.	Type	Total Nos. checked	Nos.	Discrepancies observed details of finding
1	Residential			
2				
3	-	-		-
1	Commercial			
2				
3				

Note: This report to be submitted after feeding the data and analyzing the same.

Signature of
Squad In charge

Petty Cash Voucher

I, Smt.------(name) -----(fathers/ husband name)------(Surname) age-----yrs. education----- resident of -----(full residential address) hereby tender the receipt of Rs.----- in words ----- at the rate of Rs. 300/- per day from Smt. ------(name) ------(fathers/ husband name)------(Surmane) J.E. -----Circle, Damini Squad Incharge towards the work of counter checking the meter reading for a period of 6 days from-----to ----- with the Squad Incharge.

Date:

Place:

Payment received by

(Squad Member)

Payment given by:

(Squad Incharge, JE)

Approved by

(S.E. O&M)