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**HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAIN TO THE COMMISSION**

Any person who has a complaint against a public utility shall in the first instance complain directly to the utility concerned for redress. Where a complaint made directly to a Utility Service Provider is not satisfactorily or promptly dealt with, the complaints shall be re-directed to the Commission with the appropriate reference details (if applicable).

It is the expectation of the Commission that the utilities will improve efficiency and internal dispute resolution mechanisms to lessen the number of disputes that will necessitate the Commission’s intervention. The Commission would like to enjoin both the utilities and customers to work with the Commission as partners in the implementation of this Complaints Procedure.

# **Communication channels for making a complaint**

The Commission shall accept complaints from the public through the following:

1. Email, info@ewrc.gov.sl or complaints@ewrc.gov.sl
2. Form available on SLEWRC website at [www.ewrc.gov.sl](http://www.ewrc.gov.sl)
3. Post mail: Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission, 55 Berwick Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone
4. Call on telephone number +232 78 359299
5. Physical delivery to the Commission: - 55 Berwick Street, Freetown, or any other offices or locations as may be designated by the Commission

To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the Commission shall provide a care room with a toll free fixed telephone line for receiving complaints.

**Filing of complaints to the Commission is governed by the following rules:**

* A complaint to the Commission may be in writing or given orally.
* A written complaint must be addressed to the Director General of the Commission via post or email.
* Where an oral complaint is made, or where the complainant cannot read or write, the complaint will be put in writing by an Officer of the Commission designated to receive complaints. The complainant may also select a person of his/her choice to write down the complaint for him or her.
* Where the complaint is written down by a person other than the complainant, it will be read over and explained to the complainant in a language that he or she understands, and a declaration to that effect made on the complaint form.
* The complainant must indicate that he or she understands what has been recorded and explained before appending his / her signature or thumb print on the complaint form.

**Information Required:**
A complaint lodged with the Commission must contain the following:

* The full name, contact address and account number of the complainant.
* The utility or person against whom the complaint is being made.
* Particulars of the nature of the complaint including the reference number given by the Utility concerned when the complaint was made to them initially, together with copies of any document in support of the complaint.
* The nature of the injustice or harm that the complainant has suffered as a result of the action, inaction or omission of the person or utility against whom the complaint is being made.
* The relief being sought by the complainant.
* Any other matter relevant to the complaint.
* Where the person who lodges a complaint is acting on behalf of another person, company or organization, he or she must state in writing the capacity in which he or she is acting, and the reason for doing so.

**HOW DOES THE COMMISSION RESPOND TO A COMPLAINT?**

* When the Commission receives a complaint, an acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 48 hours and a copy of the complaint forwarded to the utility providing the service within three (3) working days of receipt of the complaint. The Utility Service Provider shall submit its response to the Commission within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint.
* The Commission conducts a preliminary enquiry and where the complaint can be resolved by mediation and settlement within a reasonable time frame, officials of the utility and the complainant are invited and settlement is initiated.
* If agreement cannot be reached, the Commission shall refer the matter to the Consumer Services Committee for a formal hearing of the complaints as provided in the Regulations. During the formal hearing, the complainant may be represented by legal or other experts or by themselves.
* At the conclusion of the formal hearing, the Consumer Services Committee panel will submit a full report (which would include their ruling and recommendations on how the complaint should be resolved) to the Commission. The Commission will then consider the Committee’s report and a decision will be made accordingly.