

NERC to sanction electricity distribution companies over high incidence of electrocution ... gives 45 days ultimatum

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has given electricity distribution companies in the country a 45-day ultimatum to submit health and safety audit report of their installations.

The Commission in a 'General Order for Distribution Licensees' circulated on Friday said it was giving the directive on account of prevalence of electrocution in the country.

According to a copy of the Order made available to newsmen, there is average of 20 incidents of electrocution on monthly basis, a development that has necessitated the Commission's hard stance.

"NERC views with great concern the frequency of electrocution occurrences industry-wide. An average of 20 incidents is recorded nation-wide every month.

"The Commission will henceforth bring to bear the full force of the law on operators who fail to comply with safety obligations pursuant to the Electric Power Sector Reform Act 2005, Regulations, Codes, other applicable Nigerian laws and regulations as well as the terms and conditions of their licenses," the Order said.

Licensed distribution companies were, therefore, ordered to submit Health and Safety Audit Report on all their facilities to the Commission within the next 45 days.

They were also directed to comply with the incident reporting procedures and regulations.

Further orders issued to the electricity companies include the immediate implementation of safety awareness campaigns in their areas of operation and submission of a work plan on attainment of healthy and safe operation to the Commission.

Meanwhile, defaulting distribution companies might be liable to a minimum of N10, 000 fine daily for as long as they remain in default.

Chief Executive Officers may also be sanctioned according to the Electric Power Sector Reform Act 2005 where further default occurs.

There are 11 electricity distribution companies, offshoot of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria and one independent power distribution company, Ikorodu Industrial Power Limited, licensed by NERC in 2006.