

January 24, 2011

Meralco explains guidelines for senior citizens' discount

In a statement issued today, Meralco explained the requirements when applying for senior citizens' discount. The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) had earlier issued guidelines on how electric utilities, such as Meralco, will implement the discount. Under Republic Act (RA) 9994, or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, senior citizens under residential rates whose monthly consumption does not exceed 100 kilowatthours (kWh) are eligible to a 5% discount in their electricity bill.

A senior citizen may avail of the discount for one residence that has been under his name for at least one year already. In case the electric service for a household is not in the name of the senior citizen, he may have it transferred to his name provided he resides there.

For the said transfer, he should go to a Meralco Business Center and follow the usual procedures for transferring accounts. As stated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9994, only after a year has elapsed since the transfer has been effected can the senior citizen apply and qualify for the discount.

Eligible senior citizens wishing to avail of the discount could start applying starting this month at any Meralco Business Center. Pursuant to Article 2, Section 2.1.4 of ERC Resolution No. 23, Series of 2010 entitled *A Resolution Adopting the Rules Implementing the Discounts to Qualified Senior Citizen End-Users and Subsidy from the Subsidizing End-Users on Electricity Consumption under Sections 4 and 5 of Republic Act No. 9994*, customers will need to bring proof of age and citizenship, proof of residence, and proof of billing.

Likewise, representatives filing the application on behalf of a qualified senior citizen shall bring, in addition to the aforementioned documents, a letter of authorization duly signed or thumb-marked by the senior citizen and a valid ID of the representative.

The Meralco Business Center shall evaluate and process applications for the Senior Citizen Discount within fifteen (15) days upon receipt of complete documents. Customers will be informed in writing of the decision on their application. If the application is approved, the discount will then take effect on the next billing period.

The senior citizen customer will be entitled to the discount for one year. In order for the grant of the discount to continue, the qualified senior citizen customer should renew entitlement to the discount prior to the expiration of said one-year period.

Under the ERC guidelines, the 5% discount will apply to the following bill components: generation charge, transmission charge, system loss charge, distribution charge, supply per kWh charge and metering per kWh charge. The remaining bill components, such as government taxes and universal charges, are not subject to the discount.

The senior citizens' discount is computed after the lifeline discount has been applied.

For those consuming 50 kWh (or with bill amount of P253.90 based on December 2010 rates), the senior citizens' discount is P13.14. For a customer with 70 kWh consumption (bill amount of P457.60), the discount is P23.54, while for those consuming 100 kWh (bill amount of P797.98), the discount is P40.89.

However, Meralco clarified that the discounts may vary on a monthly basis depending on the rates for the month.

50% Discounts for Senior Citizen Institutions

Senior citizen institutions that have been accredited by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and have been in operation for at least six months can also apply for the senior citizens' discount starting this month.

Qualified senior citizen institutions will get a 50% discount on the following electric bill components: generation charge, transmission charge, system loss charge, distribution charge, supply per kWh charge and metering per kWh charge.

Under the Act, eligible institutions include senior citizen centers and residential care institutions or group homes that are government-run or non-stock, non-profit domestic corporations.

They should have been organized and operated primarily for the purpose of promoting the well-being of abandoned, neglected, unattached or homeless senior citizens.

To be eligible, the institution must also have a separate meter for its facilities that are devoted to the care of senior citizens.

Institutions that meet the above qualifications should present their DSWD Certificate of Accreditation and endorsement letter from the DSWD when applying for the discount.

The institution also has to be able to furnish other relevant documents, such as a copy of their Meralco bill and articles of incorporation.

The discount is subject to renewal, the date of which shall coincide with the expiry of the institution's DSWD Accreditation. For the institution to continue entitlement to the discount, it should ensure that its Accreditation is renewed, along with its entitlement for the discount.

Meralco said that customers eligible for the senior citizens' discount are encouraged to complete their requirements before going to the Meralco Business Centers to apply for the said discount.

In so doing, their application can be evaluated and processed faster and more efficiently. This is a privilege that we truly hope would be enjoyed by as many of our eligible customers as possible.