

April 2026

Government of India notifies the Central Electricity Authority (Installation and Operation of Meters) Amendment Regulations, 2026

The Central Electricity Authority (“CEA”), on February 23, 2026, had released the draft CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) Amendment Regulations, 2026 (“**Draft Regulations**”)¹ for stakeholder consultation, inviting comments by March 26, 2026. Subsequently, on April 1, 2026, CEA notified the CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) Amendment Regulations, 2026 (“**2026 Regulations**”). The 2026 Regulations carry forward the amendments proposed in the Draft Regulations.

The CEA amended Regulation 4 (*Types of Meters*) and Regulation 7 (*Location of Meters*) of the CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) Regulations, 2006 (“Principal Regulations”). These amendments further the ongoing policy push towards smart metering and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (“AMI”) and refine the metering framework under the Principal Regulations.

Salient features

Removal of mandatory requirement for pre-paid smart meters

1. The CEA (Installation and Operation of Meters) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 had mandated that “*All consumers in areas with communication network, shall be supplied electricity with Smart Meters working in pre-payment mode*” by way of an amendment in Regulation 4 (1) (b) of the Principal Regulations.
2. However, the 2026 Regulations have removed this mandatory requirement by amending Regulation 4 (1) (b) of the Principal Regulations.
3. The 2026 Regulations now stipulate that consumers will be supplied electricity through smart meters conforming to Indian Standards, without prescribing any specific billing mode.

Expansion of smart meter and AMI requirements

Further, the 2026 Regulations have added 2 (two) new provisos to Regulation 4 (1) (b) of the Principal Regulations. These include the following:

1. Third Proviso: AMI must support pre-payment functionality and must be inter-operable in accordance with the guidelines issued by the CEA; and
2. Fourth Proviso: Smart meters of relevant Indian Standard with an accuracy class of 1.0/0.5S will function as interface meters for open access consumers at voltage levels not exceeding 650 (six hundred and fifty) volts.

¹ For detailed analysis, please refer to the [JSA Prism of March 11, 2026](#).

Revised location of interface meters for open access consumers

The 2026 Regulations have made the following amendments to Regulation 7 (1) (a) by modifying the provisions relating to interface meters for open access consumers:

1. for consumers directly connected to Inter-State Transmission Systems or Intra-State transmission systems or distribution system who have been permitted open access at voltage levels exceeding 650 (six hundred and fifty) volts, the Main Meter and the Check Meter will be at the consumer premises. The standby meter will be either on separate instrument transformers at the consumer premises or at the licensee's sub-station, as mutually agreed; and
2. a new category has been introduced for open access consumers at voltage levels not exceeding 650 (six hundred and fifty) volts. Under this category, the main meter and check meter must be installed at the consumer premises.

Conclusion

The 2026 amendment has made a remarkable shift in India's smart metering framework. Notably, on one hand, the 2026 Regulations transition towards smart meters and AMI, while, on the other hand it consciously moves away from the mandate of pre-paid billing, thereby providing flexibility to distribution licensees and consumers in determining the mode of billing. The 2026 Regulations have struck a balance with the modernisation of the smart metering infrastructure while accommodating practical implementation concerns relating to the mode of billing.

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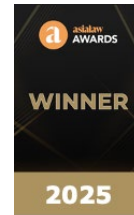
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