

LUCELEC Launches Electricity Theft Reduction Initiative

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The Saint Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC) has launched a major campaign aimed at reducing electricity theft. Electricity theft costs paying customers and LUCELEC a significant amount of money, puts lives and property at risk and affects power quality.

LUCELEC Chief Engineer Goodwin d’Auvergne explains, “Beyond the fact that legitimate customers are, in fact, subsidising persons stealing electricity, electricity theft is an extremely dangerous practice which can lead to persons getting electrocuted, electricity related fires, and increased incidence of damaged appliances as a result of reduction in power quality. This is because illegal connections do not meet LUCELEC standards and are placing greater loads on some parts of the system than intended.”

There are three main methods used by persons seeking to obtain electricity illegally. These include making direct connections to LUCELEC power lines, meter tampering to cause the meter to under-register the amount of electricity actually consumed, and by-passing the meter so that all or some of the electricity consumed is undetected by the meter.

Beginning immediately, the company will be stepping up its efforts to detect illegal connections and meter tampering. Additional resources will be directed towards this effort including support from the Royal St. Lucia Police Force since electricity theft is a criminal offense.

Based on reports being received by the Company it appears that in some cases perpetrators of electricity theft are being aided and abetted by persons with expert knowledge of electrical installation. The Company is adopting a zero tolerance approach to this practice and will exercise all its rights under the law in collecting evidence and prosecuting offenders where necessary.

The field exercise will also be supported by a public education campaign on the dangers and other implications of electricity theft. The overall aims of the exercise are to reduce electricity theft and discourage the practice, maintain the integrity and safety of the power system, reduce losses on the system, and improve power quality.

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