

CONSUMER PROTECTION IN PETROLEUM / PNG /LPG SECTOR

OVERVIEW:

The petroleum industry also known as the oil industry includes the process of exploration, extraction, refining, transporting and marketing of petroleum products. The largest volume products of the industry are fuel oil and gasoline (petrol).

Both public sector and private sector supply domestic LPG. The Public sector companies which supply domestic LPG are Indian Oil Corporation Ltd with their subsidiary company IBP (Indo Burma Petroleum), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, and Bharat Petroleum Ltd.

GROUNDS FOR COMPLAINTS:

The major complaints from the users of LPG are as follows:

- At the time of new connection, dealers are insisting that the customer must take various appliances (like gas stove at Dealers' choice, Rubber hose and other allied equipment).
- Delay in supplying gas cylinder is a major problem for all gas suppliers. Dealers are not entertaining the phone calls and not registering the customer booking.
- Gas cylinder is less in weight or not fully filled.
- Tedious formalities in booking a new gas connection.

The complaints against PNG are as follows:

- Abnormal delay in getting new connection
- Billing problem
- No appropriate complaint registering centre (CRC).
- Delay in attending complaints etc.

COMPLAINT

REDRESSAL

SYSTEM:

For PSU Oil Companies, they have provided their own network system to handle consumer grievance spread throughout the country. Each company has their own IVRS (Interactive voice Response System) which are applicable throughout all metro cities. State-wise Regional Customer care Centres exist where grievances can be lodged. They also have 24 hrs customer care centre. Emergency telephone numbers are provided by the agencies at various places.

Complaint can be sent to the nodal officer of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas. The Petroleum and Natural gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is the regulatory body. It pays attention to regulation of consumer complaints.

The last step is to approach the consumer forum.

COMPLAINT REGISTRATION:

The consumers can also register their complaint under National Consumer Helpline

The below given link helps the consumers in registering the complaint

<http://www.nationalconsumerhelpline.in/ComplaintFile.aspx>

REGULATORY BODY AND ACTS:

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006 was enacted in April, 2006. The Government has set up the PNGRB in October, 2007 to regulate the refining, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, marketing and sale of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas. The aim is to protect the interest of consumers and entities engaged in specific activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas and to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of these products in all parts of the country. It also aims to promote competitive markets.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006

<http://www.pngrb.gov.in/pdf/Act/pngrbact.doc>

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order 2000

http://jklm.nic.in/pdf/LPG_regulation_of_distribution.pdf

Petroleum Act, 1934

<http://www.advocatekhoj.com/library/bareacts/petroleum/index.php?Title=Petroleum%20Act,%201934>

PROCEEDING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 1986:

One can file a case in the respective consumer forums /Commission either in case of getting relief or to appeal.

http://clap.nls.ac.in/?page_id=102

REFERENCE:

Reference from the Links of Acts mentioned under the subheading 'Regulatory Body and Acts'

<http://www.nationalconsumerhelpline.in/Lpg.aspx>

<http://www.manupatrafast.com/articles/PopOpenArticle.aspx?ID=3b9928f3-1807-4916-b783-33b3c38992db&txtsearch=Subject:%20Oil%20And%20Gas>