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Electricity theft affects all of us

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I HAVE been hearing a lot about electricity theft lately. As a consumer rights advocate, I feel I must point out how dangerous it is and how it impacts consumers.

Electricity theft occurs when individuals or businesses illegally tap into the electrical grid, bypassing meters or tampering with them to avoid payment. Here's an overview of how bad electricity theft can be that I have gathered through my research:

Economic losses: Electricity theft is estimated to account for around 20% of total power generated, causing losses in billions annually. These losses often get passed on to paying consumers through higher electricity rates.

Grid instability: Electricity theft can destabilise the electrical grid. Unauthorised connections can cause voltage fluctuations, blackouts, and equipment damage, reducing the efficiency of the power supply and increasing maintenance costs.

Safety risks: Tampering with electrical infrastructure poses serious safety hazards. Illegal connections can lead to short circuits, fires, and even electrocutions, endangering lives and property.

Sabotaging conservation: Electricity theft also undermines energy conservation efforts. The illegal use of electricity can increase the overall demand for power generation, contributing to higher carbon emissions and greater strain on natural resources.

Furthermore, I am told electricity theft is sometimes organised by criminal syndicates that sell stolen power to consumers. Criminal activity of any kind is always detrimental to the people.

Addressing electricity theft requires a combination of improved technology (like smart meters), stricter legal enforcement, and community awareness campaigns.

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