

# **Government of West Bengal**

## **Consumer Affairs Department**

### **: Vision and Mission:**

#### **❖ The vision of this department is :-**

- ✓ To protect the rights of consumers
- ✓ To spread awareness about consumer rights, duties and responsibilities
- ✓ To promote consumer movements in the State through involvement of various stakeholders
- ✓ To empower the eligible citizen to obtain public services within stipulated time

#### **❖ Executing Wings:**

- The main functions of this Department are carried out through the following wings:
  - i) Directorate of Consumer Affairs & Fair Business Practices
  - ii) Directorate of Legal Metrology
  - iii) This Department also monitors the functioning of State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDRC) and District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (DCDRC)
- Right to Public Services Act: - Government of West Bengal has introduced West Bengal Right to Public Services Act, 2013 to ensure disposal of essential notified services of public utility within stipulated time. Consumer Affairs Department is the Nodal Department for implementation of the Act.

#### **❖ Main Functions of this Department:**

- i) The department generates awareness among the consumers of their rights and entitlements through the Directorate of CA & FBP.
- ii) The department implements and enforces the provisions of Legal metrology Act, 2009 through Directorate of legal metrology to ensure metrological accuracy in commercial transactions and maintain standards of weights and measures
- iii) The department also monitors and tracks progress of complaints filed in SCDRC and DCDRCs
- iv) This is also the nodal department to ensure implementation of the provisions of The West Bengal Right to public Service Act, 2013

#### **❖ New Initiatives:**

- i) Integrated Office Building: - Integrated Office Buildings have been completed at Rajarhat, Paschim Medinipur, Uttar Dinajpur, Bankura and Murshidabad. Administrative Approval

and Financial Sanction has been received for the districts of Paschim Bardhaman, Purulia and Birbhum.

- ii) To implement the initiatives related to EoDB( Ease of Doing Business), Phase I of the e Parimap project (Computerization of Legal Metrology) had been launched w.e.f. 01.09.2017. All the works (like submission, processing and disposal) related to issuance/renewal/ alteration of Legal Metrology Licenses & issuance/alteration of Certificate of Registration of Packer/Importer/Manufacturer are being done online. Phase II of this project having Verification Module was launched on 25.11.2021.
- iii) On-line filing of cases related to Consumer grievances through the service of e-daakhil has been launched  
on 24.11.2021 on the occasion of National Consumer Rights Day.  
iv) All posts of Presidents in different DCDRCs have been filled up. Barring one member, all members in different districts have been also been posted.

❖ **A brief description of the functioning of the parastatals of this department is mentioned below:**

▪ **Directorate of Consumer Affairs & Fair Business Practices:**

- i. The Directorate of CA & FBP under the Consumer Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal was established in October, 2001 with 25 Regional Offices, Directorate of Head Quarters along with Divisional offices.
- ii. Presently there are 30 (thirty) Regional Offices across the State along with 6 (six) Sub-Divisional level ROs functioning from District Head Quarters (The Divisional Offices have been abolished in 2012).
- iii. Consumer Affairs Department has taken initiatives to help poor and aggrieved consumers by way of granting legal aid, so that they can defend their cases in Consumer Forum.
- iv. Directorate Of CA & FBP
  - a) Helps consumers to file complaints through Consumer Commission-specific **Consumer Assistance Bureaus** run by NGOs and funded from Consumer Welfare Fund
    - The entitled consumers are getting free of cost legal assistance
    - At present 22 CABs are functioning in 22 District Commissions
  - b) Generates awareness among the consumers and promotes the activities of the Department through different Media.

- c) Propagates consumer awareness in general through its 30 (thirty) ROs by means of participation in Mela / Public gatherings, seminar, workshop, plying of Tableau, folk song, street theatre, magic show, talking doll show and various other popular modes of publicity. Consumer Affairs Department is monitoring those activities on regular basis.
- d) A good number of 'Investors Awareness Camps' have been organized in collaboration with RBI, SEBI and Directorate of Economic Offences, West Bengal.
- e) Assists the Directorate of Legal Metrology in RO level to conduct joint raid programmes with the ROs under Directorate of CA & FBP
- f) In each district, Assistant Directors in RO level act as Member Secretary of the District Consumer Protection Council which is chaired by the concerned District Magistrate of the District.
- g) The Assistant Directors in ROs act as members of the Khadya Sarbaraha-o-Sthayee Samity in the Zilla Parishad.
- h) A Toll Free Consumer Help Line Number (1800 345 2808) was introduced on 24-12-2011 for counselling of the aggrieved consumers. In addition to above, free of cost counselling over telephone as well as across the table are being done at the Regional Offices. The SCH became a part of the portal of State Consumer Helpline Knowledge Resource Management Portal (SCHKRMP) from 5th October, 2015 under the guidance of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.
- i) PSC, WB recommended 172 Consumer Welfare Officers (CWO), out of which 126 CWOs have joined.
- j) Directorate organizes Kreta Suraksha Mela every year in the Month of Feb-March.
- K) World Consumer Rights Day is observed on 15<sup>th</sup> March and National Consumer Rights Day on 24<sup>th</sup> December every year.

▪ **Directorate of Legal Metrology:**

The West Bengal Weights & Measures (Legal Metrology) Organization was set up in 1959 under the administrative control of Commerce & Industries Department of Govt. of West Bengal. It was brought under the administrative control of the Consumer Affairs Department in June 2000. In 2003, the Legal Metrology Organization has been upgraded to a full-fledged Directorate. This directorate is entrusted to enforce various provisions of Legal Metrology Act, 2009 and rules made there under to safeguard the interest of consumers, who may otherwise be vulnerable to fraudulent use of weight and measures and unscrupulous manufactures, packers and traders and works in close collaboration with Govt. of India. This Directorate functions with the help of the following legislations

• **Legislation:**

- i) The Government of India has enacted the Legal Metrology Act 2009 which had come into force on 1st April, 2011.
- ii) The Legal Metrology Act, 2009 also provides for establishing uniform standards of weights and measures regulate trade in weights, and other goods which are sold or distributed by weight, measure or number.
- iii) In order to implement different provisions of this Act, following Rules have been framed by Government of India:
  - 1. The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011
  - 2. The Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011
  - 3. The Legal Metrology (Approval of Models) Rules, 2011
  - 4. The Legal Metrology (National Standards) Rules, 2011
  - 5. The Legal Metrology (Numeration) Rules, 2011
  - 6. The Indian Institute of Legal Metrology Rules, 2011
  - 7. The Legal Metrology (Government Approved Test Centre) Rules, 2013
- iv) For implementation of different provisions of this Act and Rules made there under, Government of West Bengal has framed “The West Bengal Legal Metrology (Enforcement) Rules, 2011”

- **The main functions of the Legal Metrology Directorate (LMD):**

- i) To provide better protection to consumers and also to constitute an essential element in the economy by ensuring metrological accuracy in commercial transactions, industrial measurements and measurements needed for ensuring public and human safety.
- ii) Maintenance of standards in relation to weights and measures as prescribed by the Central Govt. in accordance with the recommendations made by the OIML –through verification & re-verification work
- iii) To earn non-tax Govt. revenue in the form of fees for verification, compounding etc. During the FY 2021-22, the Directorate of legal Metrology realized an amount of Rs. 21,81,43,324/- and covered 577646 traders and 5099 markets. In the FY 2022-23, till the month of June 2022, no. of traders and markets covered are 142307 and 1192 respectively. Rs. 5,32,41,898/- has been realized as Non-Tax revenue.
- iv) Phase I of the e-Parimap project (Computerization of Legal Metrology) was launched w.e.f. 01.09.2017 and since then all the works (like submission, processing and disposal) related to issuance/renewal/ alteration of Legal Metrology Licenses & issuance/alteration of Certificate of Registration of Packer/Importer/Manufacturer are being done online. Phase II of e-parimap for verification module has been launched on 25.11.2021.
- v) Recently, PSC, WB has recommended 22 candidates in LD posts and 17 for the post of ILMs. Processing of PVR and MR is going on.

- **Consumer Forum (SCDRC / DCDRC) in West Bengal:**

- i) WBSCDRC (West Bengal State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission) is functioning at the ground floor of Kreta Suraksha Bhawan, 11A, Mirza Ghalib Street,

- Kolkata-700087. West Bengal State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission is functioning with its 3 (three) Benches in Kolkata and other 2 Benches - one at Siliguri (**Siliguri Circuit Bench** with jurisdiction of North Bengal Districts) and another at Asansol (**Asansol Circuit Bench** with the jurisdiction of Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman, Birbhum, Bankura and Purulia). The **Siliguri Circuit Bench** has started functioning w.e.f. 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2018 and **Asansol Circuit Bench** has started functioning w.e.f. 09<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.
- ii) At present 26 District Commissions are functioning including new **District Commission, Kolkata Unit-IV at Sealdah started w.e.f. 01/07/2021.**
  - iii) Court function of WBSCDRC and all the District Commission have been brought under automation through online case monitoring system under CONFONET scheme, phase-III. People are now able to access daily proceedings of their cases through **www.confonet.nic.in.**
  - v) With the initiatives taken by the Consumer Affairs Deptt. arrangement of **Virtual Court hearing** in State Commission has been done effectively. On-line filing of cases in Consumer Commissions in West Bengal through **e-daakhil Portal** has been launched w.e.f. 24.12.2021.
  - vi) Recently, PSC, WB has recommended 21 candidates for LD posts in different DCDRCs. Processing of PVR and MR is going on.

▪ **The West Bengal Right to Public Service Commission:**

- i) **Awareness generation on WBRTPS Act, 2013:-** The West Bengal Right to Public Service Commission works on the mission of generation of awareness with a view to enable the service seekers in obtaining public service within the stipulated time period. This is implemented with the help of Directorate of Consumer Affairs & Fair Business Practices.
- ii) **Activities:-** The Commission ensures proper implementation of the Act through its different instruments as provided in the Act. In this respect, the Commission also makes recommendations to the State Government.
- iii) **Inspection :-** Since its beginning, the Commission causes inspection at different offices including that of appellate and reviewing authorities at different district and state level offices. Officers of Directorate of CA & FBP are entrusted with the inspection works. Inspections has been held in this year in 8 (eight) Districts.