



CIVIL

India Proposes Draft Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025

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The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, through its Legal Metrology Division, has issued the draft **Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025**, for public consultation. Stakeholders have been invited to submit their feedback by **February 14, 2025**. These proposed rules aim to establish a comprehensive legal framework for defining, implementing, and standardizing **Indian Standard Time (IST)** across the country, ensuring uniformity and synchronization in timekeeping practices.

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A Framework for Time Synchronization

The draft rules emphasize the mandatory use of IST, defined as **5 hours and 30 minutes ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)**. The **CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL)** is identified as the custodian of IST, responsible for its maintenance and ensuring its traceability to UTC.

Additionally, the rules define the **second**, the base unit of time, using the internationally recognized cesium-133 atomic clock standard.

Key Provisions of the Draft Rules

- Mandatory Use of IST:** IST is proposed to be the **official time reference** for all **legal, administrative, commercial, and financial transactions** across India. This move aims to eliminate inconsistencies in timekeeping and improve coordination nationwide.
- Standard Format for Time Representation:** The draft specifies standard formats for time:
 - Time only:** HH:MM:SS
 - Date and time:** DD-MM-YYYY-HH:MM:SS
- Display of IST:** All **government offices** and **public institutions** will be required to display IST on their time-keeping devices. Synchronization will be ensured through technologies such as **Network Time Protocol (NTP)** or **Precision Time Protocol (PTP)**.
- Use of Other Time Zones:** While IST will be the mandatory time reference, the display of other time zones is allowed for informational purposes, provided they are accompanied by IST and clearly labelled.

Focus on Cybersecurity and Resilience

Recognizing the growing reliance on digital systems for time synchronization, the rules mandate:

- Cybersecurity measures** to safeguard time-synchronization systems against threats such as **jamming, spoofing, and cyberattacks**.
- Use of **terrestrial-based time distribution systems** and **NavIC signals** as backup mechanisms to ensure accuracy and reliability in the event of disruptions.

Exceptions and Special Cases

The draft allows for **authorized deviations** from IST for specific purposes, including:

- Scientific research**
- Astronomy**

- **Navigation**

These deviations will require prior approval and must comply with government directives.

Compliance and Monitoring

The proposed rules outline strict mechanisms for **compliance and periodic audits** to ensure adherence to IST standards. Detailed standards for synchronization accuracy and reporting mechanisms will be issued through subsequent advisories.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

Violators of these rules will face penalties, including **finest** or other actions, as determined by the authorized officials under the Legal Metrology Act.

Guidelines for Implementation

To support the implementation of these rules, the **Central Government** will issue additional guidelines and advisories as needed. These will address:

- Time synchronization procedures
- Monitoring mechanisms
- Standards for time accuracy

Invitation for Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide their inputs by February 14, 2025, to refine and finalize the proposed framework.

The draft **Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025**, represent a significant step towards modernizing and standardizing timekeeping practices in India. By ensuring nationwide adherence to IST, the government seeks to enhance coordination, accuracy, and security in time-sensitive operations across all sectors.

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