

NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION

QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS

APRIL 1, 2004 TO MARCH 31, 2007

(Or until next Tariff Review whichever occurs first)

OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION ACT 1995 AS AMENDED

In exercise of the powers vested on the Office of Utilities Regulation by Section (3)(b) AND Section 4 (5) of the Office of Utilities Regulation Act 1995 as amended, the Quality of Service Standards for National Water Commission in respect of the supply of water and sewerage services as set out in the Overall Standards respectively are **HEREBY APPROVED** effective **April 1, 2004**.

BY ORDER OF THE OFFICE

J. Paul Morgan
Director General
Office of Utilities Regulation

STATEMENT ON QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS SCHEME FOR NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION

Legal Framework

Pursuant to section 4 of the OUR Act, the OUR is mandated to regulate the services of utility service providers. It is also empowered to give, where it considers necessary, directions to service providers to ensure that the needs of the consumers of the service are met. Additionally, it has a responsibility to ensure that the service providers operate in an efficient manner so as to protect the well being of users and the public at large. Given the implied responsibility to balance the interests of both consumers and service providers, the Office is of the opinion that one of the most appropriate means to achieve this objective is through stipulation of various quality of service standards. These

standards will be the basis on which quality of service provided to customers by the utility service providers will be assessed. Generally, the quality of service standards will not only serve as an indication of whether good quality of service is provided to customers but will also compel the service provide to continuously improve its operational efficiencies.

To ensure compliance with these standards, the Office now publishes these overall and guaranteed standards, in accordance with its powers under section 4 (5) (b) of the OUR Act. To enable the OUR to continuously monitor the performance of the NWC in relation to these standards, the necessary reporting requirements

forms part of the regulatory framework, issued by the Office under Section (10) (1) of the OUR Act (this document is available on the OUR's website at www.our.org.jm).

Determination

Various proposals were submitted by the NWC which the Office reviewed before arriving at a decision on the quality of service standards. (The complete document may be viewed on OUR's website at www.our.org.jm). Tables 1 and 2 summarize the overall and guaranteed standards respectively. With the exception of WGS10, which was subsequently amended, these standards become effective April 1, 2004. The changes to WGS 10 are:

".....Not applicable in situations where NWC has removed infrastructure as a consequence of illegal connections".

in Table 2 and the addition of the following sentence:

"This standard does not apply in those circumstances where the supply has been illegally reconnected and the NWC has subsequently removed all infrastructures. In these circumstances a request for reconnection will be treated as a new connection and the WGS 1 would apply".

in the definition of the Quality of Service Standards. These changes become effective June 18, 2004.

Likewise, the compensatory payment of 4 times the service charge becomes effective April 1, 2004. The applicable service charge in the definition of compensatory payment means the gazetted rate adjusted by the applicable price adjustment mechanism (PAM) at the date of payment.

All compensatory payments are to be made within 60 days of the date the claim was received. Claims should be made within 2 billing periods or 60 days (whichever is longer) of the breach.

Payments for breach of guaranteed standards will be credited to customers' accounts. The

message on the bill will be labeled "compensation for breach of guaranteed standard".

The Office maintains the view that the NWC has not done enough to make customers aware of the various quality of service standards. The NWC is required to promote the new revised standards and payments through bill stuffers as well as in at least one form of electronic or print media. The standards should also be adequately displayed at all NWC offices. In this regard, the Office requires a definitive timetable from the NWC outlining the programme for promoting these standards over the three year period.

The OUR has included in the regulatory framework, for the NWC, the various reports that will be required to enable monitoring of the Commission's performance in relation to these standards. The OUR, through its Consumer Affairs Department, will report on the NWC's performance in its quarterly and annual reports.

The NWC's performance in relation to the overall standards will be taken into account at the next tariff review.

Force Majeure conditions and exemptions from Standards

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme will be suspended in circumstances where compliance is beyond the control of NWC. The OUR must be promptly notified by the NWC in all cases of suspension or proposed suspension of the scheme indicating the exact duration of such suspension. The burden of proof of exceptional circumstance will lie with NWC. Examples of possible exceptional events are:

- bad weather or natural disaster
- system conditions such as major breakdown of treatment plants or pumping stations
- Drought

- Civil unrest
- Strikes; and
- Malicious destruction of property

On receiving the concurrence of the OUR that a Force Majeure condition exists, NWC will use appropriate means to advise customers. NWC

must also make the necessary effort to restore normal service to its customers as quickly as possible and to advise the Office when the force majeure condition has ceased. Notwithstanding, the Office may, after making its own enquires, declare Force Majeure conditions to have ceased to exist.

Table 1: OVERALL STANDARDS

CODE	FOCUS	DESCRIPTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
WOS1	Water Quality	Testing samples for impurities	To ensure that water is within standards as specified by MOH
WOS2	Water Pressure	Minimum/maximum water pressure	Must maintain a pressure ranging from 20 to 60 psi
WOS3	Reliability of supply	Notify public of intention to interrupt supply – planned interruptions	Minimum notification time of 12 hours for short interruptions (less than 4 hours) and 24 hours for longer interruptions (more than 4 hours)
WOS4	Reliability of supply	Restoration after emergency lock -off	Maximum time of 24 hours to restore supply in urban areas. Maximum of 48 hours in rural areas.
WOS5	Sewerage	Correction of sewerage problems	Maximum of 24 hours to correct sewerage problems, after being informed
WOS6	Sewage	Sewage effluent quality	Ensure that sewerage effluent is within the standards specified by NEPA
WOS7	Water meters	Changing meters	NWC must provide consumers with details of the date of the change, meter readings on the day and serial numbers of the new meter

Table 2: GUARANTEED STANDARDS

CODE	FOCUS	DESCRIPTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
WGS1	Access	Connection to supply	Maximum time of 10 working days
WGS2	Delivery of bills	Issue of first bill	Maximum time of 48 working days after connection
WGS3	Appointments	Keeping appointments	Must make and keep an appointment at customers request and must notify customer prior to appointed time, if cannot keep appointment.
WGS4	Complaints	Response to complaints not bill related	Maximum of 5 working days to acknowledge customer complaints, after receipt. Maximum time of 30 working days to complete investigation and respond, from date of receipt of complaint
WGS5	Complaints	Response to billing complaints	Maximum of 5 working days to acknowledge customer complaints, after receipt. Maximum time of 30 working days to complete investigation and respond, from date of receipt of complaint
WGS6	Account status	Issue of account status	Meter to be read on same day customer is moving, if on a weekday (within 2 days of move if on a weekend) providing 5 days notice of move is given. Maximum time of 15 working days to provide final bill after move
WGS7	Water meters	Meter installation	Maximum of 30 working days to install meter on customer's request
WGS8	Water meters	Repair or replacement of faulty meters	Maximum time of 40 working days to repair or replace meter after being informed of defect
WGS9	Water meters	Meter reading	Maximum of 2 months between each meter reading and between bill issues
WGS10	Reconnection	Reconnection after payment of overdue amount	Maximum of 24 hours to restore supply in urban areas. Maximum of 48 hours to restore supply in rural areas. Not applicable in situations where NWC has removed infrastructure as a consequence of illegal connections.
WGS11	Compensation	Payment of compensation	Maximum of 60 days after claim is received to process and make payment. Customer must make claim within 2 billing periods or 60 days (whichever is longer) to make claims of perceived breach

DEFINITION OF QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS FOR NWC ¹

Overall Standards

Drinking Water Quality

Objective: To ensure that the water supplied is always of the highest quality and fit for consumption.

WOS1 - Testing samples for impurities

Definition: It is the duty of the NWC to make periodical analyses of water samples to ensure quality. NWC is required to take any water samples necessary for analysis, at both source and distribution points, and check if the samples are within the standards specified by The Ministry of Health (MOH) Environment Control Division. 100% of all samples should meet the required standards. The NWC must also comply with the sampling regime established by MOH.

Water Pressure

Objective: NWC is required to maintain a pressure in the pipes that will ensure that customers receive an adequate supply of water.

WOS2 - Minimum/Maximum water pressure

Definition: NWC should ensure that the pressure of water supplied to consumers is within the range of 20 to 60 psi at all times. During drought conditions, NWC should repeatedly advise customers of areas affected by low pressure or no supply. This standard will be waived for the period that the drought persists. The NWC must notify the Office of the existence of drought conditions, etc.

Reliability of Supply

Objective: To minimize and manage interruptions to supply for planned and unplanned (emergencies) work effectively and allowing customers to plan for such events.

WOS3 - Notice of planned work

Definition: NWC is required to inform customers at least 24 hours beforehand when there is need to turn off the water supply for more than 4 hours and the duration of the outage. NWC also has to give at least 12 hours notice of work that is expected to last between 1 and 4 hours. The public is to be advised and apologies issued in the appropriate medium if the NWC cannot restore water supply at the specified time. Notification of outage, in the first instance, should be by means to enable the most effective communication to the affected customers.

The required notification time should be given for at least 90% of planned interruptions, (for work of duration not more than 4 hours as well as those of duration more than 4 hours).

¹ Unless otherwise stated, references to days are "calendar days".

WOS4 - Restoration after emergency lock-off

Definition: If there is a burst water main or other emergency, NWC may not be able to warn customers that there will be water lock-offs. NWC should, however, inform customers by making announcements on at least one radio station within 2 hours after interruption. NWC will be required to provide an alternative supply of water if necessary (trucking water to affected areas), and to restore supply within 24 or 48 hours (for urban or rural customers, respectively).

NWC must inform customers of unplanned lock-offs (within 2 hours after interruption) at least 90% of the time. Similarly, supply must be restored within 24 or 48 hours (for urban and rural areas) at least 90% of the time. Alternative supply of water, if necessary, must be provided to at least 95% of affected customers.

Sewerage

Objective: To ensure acceptable effluent quality and minimize flooding from sewers.

WOS5 - Correction of sewerage problems

Definition: NWC must correct all problems, which result in flooding from sewers, within 24 hours of being informed.

WOS6 - Testing effluent samples to verify that plant are operating in compliance with NEPA requirements

Definition: NWC is required to periodically take any effluent samples necessary for analysis and check if the samples are within the standards specified by The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).

99% of all samples must meet the required standards.

Water Meters

Objective: To ensure that customers are promptly provided with a properly functioning meter.

WOS7 - Changing meters

Definition: If NWC needs to change a customer's meter, they are required to leave written details of the date of the change, meter readings (of old and new meters) on the day and serial numbers of the new meter at all times.

Guaranteed Standards

Access

Objective: To ensure that new customers are promptly connected to NWC's system.

WGS1 - Connection to Supply

Definition: NWC is required to connect all new customers, where water supply is available at the property boundary, within 10 working days after signing the contract for connection.

Guarantee: If NWC fails to connect a customer within the specified period, NWC will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

Delivery of Bills

Objective: To ensure that new customers receive first bill, in a timely manner.

WGS2 - Issue of First Bill

Definition: NWC must issue (print and mail) a bill to a new customer within 48 days after connection.

Guarantee: If NWC fails to issue a bill within the specified period, NWC will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

Appointments

Objective: To minimize the inconvenience to customers of having to wait for NWC's representatives to attend appointments.

WGS3 - Keeping appointments

Definition: NWC has a responsibility to satisfy a customer's request for a representative to visit the customer's premises to deal with an identifiable problem. Appointments should be made with NWC (and its field officers) for either morning (9:00am to 12:00pm) or afternoon (12:00pm to 5:00pm). NWC must guarantee to keep all appointments or to notify the customer prior to the appointed time, if an emergency prevents them from keeping the appointment.

If upon arrival at premises, the customer has already left, the field officer should leave details, including time of visit, meter reading and number and contact number, on a door hanger. If customer cannot be contacted, the NWC should notify him/her within 5 days and advise of new appointment within 10 days.

Guarantee: If for any reason NWC does not keep an agreed appointment or does not give notice of a change, NWC will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made. If the customer does not keep the appointment, he/she will not be entitled to payment on the subsequent rescheduled appointment.

Complaints

Objective: To ensure that, customers' complaints (written, by telephone or in person) are dealt with promptly and satisfactorily by NWC.

WGS4 - Response to complaints not related to billing

(Complaints not related to billing include, faulty meters, low pressure, poor water quality)

Definition: If a complaint is made in writing to the NWC, the NWC must acknowledge the complaint 5 working days after receipt of complaint (by dispatching letter and any other mode of communication). It should also undertake, in the response, its intent to conclude its investigation and reply within 30 working days of the receipt of the complaint.

NWC is required to take details of complaints made by telephone or in person, at the time of the call or visit.

If the complaint requires investigation, conclusion of investigation as well as response to customer should be within 30 working days of receipt of complaint.

Guarantee: If NWC does not make the necessary response within the specified time, it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

WGS5 - Response to complaints about billing matters

Definition: NWC is required to acknowledge complaint within 5 working days and reply to all complaints whether written or by phone regarding bills within 30 working days of receiving the inquiry.

Guarantee: If NWC does not make the necessary response within the specified time, it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

Account status

Objective: To ensure that a customer moving from a premises receives bill for relevant consumption.

WGS6 - Account status request

Definition: If a customer is moving and requests an account status and/or service to cease, NWC is required to read the customer's meter on the day the customer is moving, if on a working day, as long as (5) working days notice of the move is given to NWC. If the customer is moving on a weekend, NWC should read the meter within two (2) days of the move. NWC is also required to provide the relevant bill within 15 working days of the customer's moving.

Guarantee: If NWC fails to meet this standard it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

Water Meters

WGS7 - Meter installation

Objective: To ensure that customers are promptly provided with properly functioning meters.

Definition: NWC is required to fit a meter, where an un-metered customer requests one, within 30 working days of receiving the customer's order. If, for some reason, the NWC is unable to meet the request, the NWC should so advise the customer and make a commitment as to

when the meter will be provided. In these circumstances, the NWC must automatically make the compensatory payment. Should the NWC not meet this commitment, it constitutes a further breach of the standard and the customer will be eligible for a compensatory payment.

Guarantee: If the NWC fails to meet the above standard, it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

WGS8 - Repair or replacement of faulty meters

Objective: To ensure that meters are functioning properly to assure the integrity of bills tendered by the NWC.

Definition: If a customer's meter is verified by the NWC as faulty, the NWC will repair or replace it within 40 working days of being first informed of defect by the customer, or within 40 working days after detection by NWC if the fault was discovered by NWC.

Guarantee: If NWC fails to meet this standard, it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

WGS9 - Meter reading

Objective: To minimize the number of estimated bills issued by the NWC.

Definition: NWC has the responsibility to provide at least one bill every two months and will guarantee to read customers' meters at least once every two months as long as it can be accessed. (NWC should make arrangements to relocate inaccessible meters)

Guarantee: If NWC fails to meet this standard, it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

Reconnection

Objective: To encourage prompt reconnection of customers after payment of overdue amounts

WGS10- Reconnection after payment of overdue amounts

Definition: NWC is required to reconnect customers, whose supply has been locked off for debt and who have settled their accounts, within 24 or 48 hours (for urban or rural customers, respectively) after debt settlement.

This standard does not apply in those circumstances where the supply has been illegally reconnected and the NWC has subsequently removed all infrastructures. In these circumstances a request for reconnection will be treated as a new connection and the WGS 1 would apply.

Guarantee: If NWC fails to reconnect customers within the specified time, it will be liable to compensate the customer after a claim is made.

Compensation

Objective: To ensure that the value of the compensation is not undermined by late receipt of payment.

WGS11 - Payment of Compensation

Definition: NWC has 60 days after claim is received to process and make payment due under the Guaranteed Standards scheme. Customer must make claim within 2 billing periods or 60 days (whichever is longer) of the perceived breach.

Guarantee: If NWC fails to make a compensatory payment within the specified time it will constitute a breach of the guaranteed standard and makes the customer eligible for compensatory payment.

If the payment due under a particular standard is not paid within the specified period, the NWC is liable to customers after claim is made. This will repeat itself for subsequent periods until payment is made.

Breach of the individual standards will, however, attract only one payment.