
Office of Utilities Regulation

Quality of Service Standard for National Water Commission

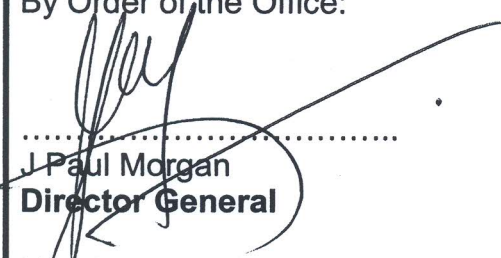
Explanatory Document and Determination



OFFICE OF UTILITIES REGULATION

March 31, 2004

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This Determination is approved by the Office of Utilities Regulation and becomes effective on April 1, 2004 .		
By Order of the Office:		
		
..... J Paul Morgan Director General		
<u>March 31, 2004</u> Date		

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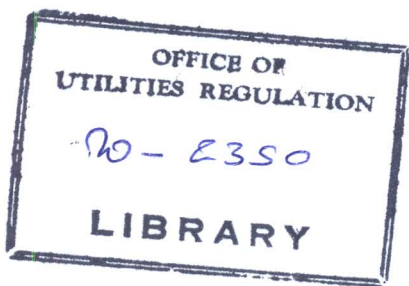
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PART 1: EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

In December 1999 the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) published the Explanatory Document on Quality of Service Standards for the National Water Commission (NWC). The document provided detailed explanations of results of the consultation process that was undertaken on quality of service issues and also the final determination of the Office on the regime of overall and guaranteed standards for the NWC. The overall standards are intended as general performance measures to ensure that consistently good quality of service is provided to customers while the guaranteed standards addresses specific aspects of service provision for which the NWC would have to make compensatory payments to affected customers should it breach them. These standards became effective April 1st 2001.

These standards were developed for the NWC specifically, and not for the water sector as a whole for two main reasons. The Office is of the view that the NWC provides the majority of the population with water and sewerage services and as such should be held at a higher level of accountability when compared to the other small water providers. Secondly, the 3 small private operators together have a customer base of less than 300 which is insignificant to the over 400,000 customer base of the NWC. To impose similar standards on them would be burdensome and unnecessarily costly. As such, the Office has made the

decision to include several standards that it considers critical to the provision of good service to customers in the licence conditions of these small operators. The Office, reviews the performance of these providers periodically to satisfy itself that these quality of service standards are adhered to.

The Explanatory document that was issued in December 1999 stipulated the compensatory payment as equal to the service charge applicable to class of service being provided to the customers affected. At that time it was equivalent to \$100 for domestic customers and ranged from \$200 to \$3000 for commercial customers. These payments would only be made after customers made a claim to the NWC. These payments should be as a one-time credit to the accounts of the affected customers. The decision provided for a review of the standards in 2003.

Customer Service Survey

In November 2002 the OUR contracted the services of Market Research Services Ltd to conduct a survey among Jamaican consumers to assess among other things the performance of the OUR and the three main utility service providers. The final report containing the results of the survey was published in April 2003. The results of the survey indicated that customers were most satisfied with the accuracy and timeliness of their bills, courtesy of staff, reliability of service and speed in resolving problems from the NWC. However, they were least satisfied with

the NWC as it relates to making contact with them and wrongful disconnection of service. The NWC also ranked second of the three main utilities with regards to disruption of service.

The survey also indicated that most of the customers (58%) were not aware of the basic standards that governed service providers operations. Of the 42% that were aware of these standards, 65% were knowledgeable of the existence of guaranteed standards and that they could make claims if any of the standards are breached. Of the customers who were aware that they could make a claim for breach of standards only 8% had done so.

With respect to the means by which consumers preferred to be compensated for the breach of guaranteed standards, 52% of households surveyed and 39% of commercial customers preferred to make a claim rather than to be automatically compensated. These percentages increased when they were asked if they would make a claim if the compensatory payments increased. Percentage of households and commercial customers that preferred to claim increased to 71% and 58% respectively.

Finally, persons were asked to rank in order of importance types of service that a utility company should guarantee. The results indicate that disruptions without notification was the most important. Immediate reconnection after payment of outstanding bills and response to emergency calls were the second most important category of households and commercial customers

respectively. Response to emergency calls and queries and carrying out repairs were the least important.

Review by Office

Despite the NWC's apparent display of support for this regime of customer service regulation, the Office has been and continues to be dissatisfied with the level of publicity given to these standards by the NWC, as well as with its non-compliance with the reporting requirements stipulated by the Office to enable assessment of the performance of the Commission in relation to the standards. The Office has also formed the view that customers who were eligible to make claims for breaches were disinclined to do so because of the low value of the compensatory payment. It also considered whether the requirement on the customer to make the initial claim was in fact a disincentive. Consequently, in the December 22nd 2003 rate determination the Office decided to increase the compensatory payments to four (4) times the service charge of the respective customer categories with effect as of April 1st 2004. The Office expects that with this increase, customers will be more eager to make claims for breaches by the NWC of the guaranteed standards, and that this will then compel the Commission to redouble its efforts to improve its quality of service.

In February 2004, the NWC made representation to the Office to have some of the overall and guaranteed standards reviewed citing the following reasons

1. Some of the standards were vague and as a result the necessary reports required could not be generated;
2. As specified by law the NWC could not make payment for breach of some of the guaranteed standards, and;
3. There was a "burden of proof" problem with some to the standards.

The Office requested that this application be made in writing. It received a formal application March 19th 2004. This application contained several proposals for changes to the overall and guaranteed standards. The details of the NWC's proposal are outlined in Table 1.

In carrying out the review the Office took into account and had regard to the results of the customer service survey that was done in 2003 April. A summary report on the outcome of the survey is posted to the OUR's website (www.our.org.jm).

As a consequence of this review, the Office has modified some standards, redefined some of the reporting requirements and generally improved on the contextual framework of the regime. Part 2 of the document sets out the details of the regime for the overall and guaranteed standards.

These standards as well as the increased compensatory payments become effective April 1st 2004 and will remain in force until March 31, 2007 or until the next tariff review, whichever occurs sooner.

Table 1: NWC's Proposal to changes in overall and guaranteed standards and Office decision

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Performance Measure	NWC's Proposal	Office Decision
WOS1	Water Quality	To ensure that water within standards as specified by MOH	Report using summary of analyses by largest parish sources not by parish, reports on other sources available on request	The Office has reviewed the IJAM standards and is of the opinion that the standards state that water quality testing should be done at source and various distribution points. The NWC should adopt the stipulation of this standards and report to the OUR on both types of testing (that is source and distribution point) by parish and by region. Therefore the standard remains as is. The reporting requirements to be included in the regulatory framework will be adjusted to reflect the changes in the reports required.
WOS2	Water pressure	Must maintain water supply pressure ranging from 20 to 60 psi	Use exception reports to report so OUR can see what complaints exist. Further investigations e.g. monitoring of pressure may be requested based on exception reports.	The Office did not require reporting requirements on this standard because of the recognized difficulty to measure the variability in pressure of a number of large systems on a daily basis. It has however accepted NWC proposition to make reports by exception and will adjust the reporting requirements accordingly.
WOS3	Reliability of supply	Minimum notification of 12 hours for short interruptions (less than 4 hours) and 24 hours for longer interruptions (more than 4 hours)	The information to be provided to OUR includes: water supply system, location, areas affected, reason for interruption, notification time before interruption, period of interruption.	The Office agrees with the information that the NWC proposes to provide. The reporting requirement will be adjusted accordingly.
WOS 4	Correction of Sewage Problems	Maximum of 24 hours to correct sewerage problems after being informed.	Report only on sewerage problems located at mains as NWC does not have control over problems on customers' premises and report by exception and full report on request.	The Office accepts NWC's proposal.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Performance Measure	NWC's Proposal	Office Decision
WOS5	Sewage Effluent Quality	Ensure that sewerage effluent is within the standards specified by NEPA	Construction of Harbour View and Soapberry wastewater treatment plants top priority. Agree schedule of rehabilitation of wastewater treatment plant by October 2004 with NOUR and NEPA as proposed in the determination notice of December 2003.	Whilst the Office has determined that there should be urgent rehabilitation to the Harbour View Treatment Plant, this was not done to ensure that the NWC complies with the NEPA standards. The Office maintains that the NWC should reach an agreement with NEPA by September 2004 (not October 2004) and all plants should be in compliance in accordance with such agreement and NEPA standards. Required reporting will reflect the agreements with NEPA.
WOS 6	Changing meters	NWC must provide consumers with details of the date of the change, meter reading on the day and serial numbers of new meters.	Reporting by exception and complete list by request. Customer notified in writing of meter change.	The Office accepts the NWC's proposal to report by exception. However, this will be subject to periodic audit by the OUR.
WGS1	Connection to supply	Maximum time of 10 working days	Full report of number of new connection requests and number fulfilled within standard to be provided. NWC should be given the discretion of fulfilling customers' request for new supply installation e.g. NWC may exclude informal settlements and red areas.	NWC's obligations do not become effective until the contract is signed with new customers. The NWC, as part of its business decision, has the right to accept or reject a contract with a customer and as such there is no need to "mandate" this discretion in the standard. When a contract is accepted, the standard applies.
WGS2	Delivery of bills (issue of first bill)	Maximum time of 48 working days after connection	A full report of all customers connected and number receiving bills within 48 working days will be provided.	NWC's proposal is accepted
WGS3	Appointments	Must notify customer prior to appointed time, if cannot keep appointment.	Appointments are made with field officers for either morning (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm) or afternoon (12pm to 5pm). A breach occurs if the customer not notified of field officer's inability to keep appointment or if the filed officer does not run up. If field officer visited after customer left, field officer leaves a door hanger with meter reading, meter #, time of visit and office telephone number. If customer cannot be contacted, notify in writing within 5 days and advise of new appointment within 10 days.	NWC's proposal is accepted. The reports in relation to this standard will be as specified in the regulatory framework. The OUR will amend the <i>Explanatory Document for the Quality of Service Standards</i> (QOS) to reflect the more precise definition above.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Performance Measure	NWC's Proposal	Office Decision
WGS4	Response to complaints not related to billing	Maximum of 5 working days to acknowledge written complaints and maximum of 30 workings days to complete investigation and respond, from date of receipt of complaint.	Proof of acknowledgement is a letter on file and a record of QMS of date of dispatch letter. Proof of response is a record on QMS indicating date of resolution. OUR can audit customer's file based on report made.	The problems are not with the reports that are required to be submitted on this standard but with the burden of proof. The Office is of the view that once NWC can provide evidence that an acknowledgment and response letter was sent to the customer then it will be satisfactory.
WGS5	Response to billing complaints	Maximum of 5 working days to acknowledge written complaints and maximum of 30 workings days to complete investigation and respond, from date of receipt of complaint.	Proof of acknowledgement is a letter on file and a record of QMS of date of dispatch letter. Proof of response is a record on QMS indicating date of resolution. OUR can audit customer's file based on report made.	The problems are not with the reports that are required to be submitted on this standard but with the burden of proof. The Office is of the view that once NWC can provide evidence that an acknowledgment and response letter was sent to the customer then it will be satisfactory.
WGS6	Account request Status -	Meter to be read on same day customer is moving if on a weekday (within 2 days if on weekend) provided 5 days notice of move is given. Customers should inform NWC of any changes in plans, a minimum of 24 hours before the originally scheduled move. Maximum time of 48 days to provide bill after move.	Meter to be read within 1 business day if customer is moving on a business day; within 2 days if on a weekend provided 10 working days notice of move is given. Customers should inform NWC of any changes in plans, minimum of 1 working day before the originally scheduled move. Maximum time of 2 working days to provide final bill after move.	The Office is of the view that it is in the best interest of the NWC to read meters on the same day that a customer moves provided that adequate notice period is given. The Office is also of the opinion that 5 days notice period is adequate time for the NWC to receive the intention of the relocation from the customer and make the necessary arrangements to read the meter. Additionally, 24 hours notification period is sufficient time to notify the Commission of any such changes. The standard specifies that the NWC should provide final bills within 48 working days after move, however, the NWC has proposed 2 working days. The Office is of the view that 2 working days is a very ambitious target within which to produce a final bill. The Office will therefore reduce the number of days to within 15 working days. The QOS document will reflect this change.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Performance Measure	NWC's Proposal	Office Decision
WGS7	Restoration after emergency lock-off	Maximum of 24 hours to restore supply in urban areas. Maximum of 48 hours in rural areas.	Propose that WGS7 be an overall standard	Upon review of this standard, the Office recognized that most, if not all, of the scenarios that would result in an emergency lock off are covered under the force majeure clause. This indemnifies the NWC from compensation payments. The Office has therefore decided to make this an overall standard (to be named WOS4).
WGS8	Water Meters Installation	Maximum of 30 working days to install a meter on customer's request	NWC should be given the discretion of fulfilling customers' requests for meter installation if feasible and viable to install. Note on log/QMS if installation of meter refused.	It should be a priority of the NWC to meter all of its customers to ensure accurate reading and billing. The NWC's proposal is not accepted.
WGS9	Water Meters Repair or replacement	Minimum time of 40 working days to repair or replace meter after being informed	NWC should be given the discretion of replacing faulty meters provided that NWC verifies that meter not working, and provided if it is feasible or viable to install. Note on log/QMS if meter replacement if refused	Like meter installation if a meter is faulty and gives inaccurate measurement it affects billing and revenues. The NWC should as a priority concentrate on revenue preservation and billing accuracy given that its main business is provision of water. The NWC's proposal is not accepted.
WGS10	Water meters changing meters	Maximum of 2 months between each meter reading and between bill issues	Maximum of three estimates between meter readings and 3 billing periods between bill issues. Exception for certain cases: red areas, meters not read because of circumstance beyond NWC's control	The Office made a determination on this matter December 22 nd 2003. It will not revisit it at this time.
WGS11	Reconnection (after payment of overdue amounts)	Maximum of 24 hours to restore supply in urban areas. Maximum of 48 hours in rural areas	After payment of overdue amount supply should be restored the next business day in urban areas, within 2 business days in rural areas. This standard does not apply to disconnection of illegal supplies.	It should be the NWC's priority to reconnect persons as soon as possible after disconnection. The Office is having some difficulty in understanding why the NWC would discriminate against persons who were disconnected for illegal connection and have subsequently made good on their accounts as such accounts would be legitimate accounts. The Office is of the view that all legitimate accounts must be treated equitably; consequently the NWC's proposal will not be accommodated.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Performance Measure	NWC's Proposal	Office Decision
GWS12	Compensation	Maximum of 60 working days to make payment when it becomes due.	Payment becomes due sixty days after claim received regardless of the state of the account. The time period within which claims can be made be limited to 60 days after breach occurred.	The Office has decided that NWC must process and make payments within 60 days of the date the claim was received. Customer has maximum of 2 billing periods or 60 days (whichever is longer) to make claim of the perceived breach.

PART 2: Office's Determination

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 intends to gazette 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 will be included in the regulatory framework, which will be issued under Section (10) (1) of the OUR Act.

Determination

The Office has reviewed NWC's submission and has made its decisions on the various proposals as outlined in Table 1. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the overall and guaranteed standards respectively. These standards become effective April 1, 2004. Likewise the new compensatory payment of 4 times the service charge becomes effective on this date. The applicable service charge will be the gazetted rate adjusted by the applicable price adjustment mechanism (PAM) at the date of payment. The relevant rates and charges may be obtained from customers' bills or the gazette of the rates at any time.

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 will be 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 a 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 that Force Majeure conditions to have ceased to exist.

Table 2: 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 3: 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.
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.

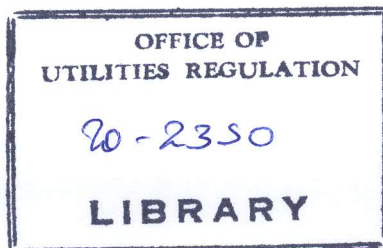
Reliability of Supply

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.

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

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.

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.