

Consumers to benefit from automatic compensation for all JPS' breaches on June 1

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2016 May 26): Come June 1, customers of the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) will be automatically compensated for any breach of its Guaranteed Standards. This marks the final phasing out of written claims made by customers to this service provider. The phasing out of written claims started June 1, 2015.

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) had determined that in keeping with Condition 17 of the All Island Electric Licence (2011), breaches of all Guaranteed Standards will attract automatic compensation. Therefore, affected customers will no longer be required to submit a claim form to receive compensation when a breach has occurred.

Compensation to affected JPS residential customers is equivalent to the reconnection fee, while commercial customers receive four (4) times the customer charge for any breach. Delay in making payments to such customers is another breach, which will attract compensation of up to eight (8) periods of non-compliance.

The remaining JPS Guaranteed Standards which will now attract automatic compensation as at June 1, 2016 are:

EGS3 – Response to emergency - JPS should respond to emergency calls within five (5) hours – emergencies include: broken wires, broken poles and fires.

EGS 5(a) – Acknowledgements - JPS must acknowledge written queries within five (5) working days.

EGS 5(b) – Investigations - JPS must complete investigations and respond to a customer within thirty (30) working days. Where investigations involve a 3rd party, same is to be completed within sixty (60) working days

EGS 7 – Estimated Bills - Customers should NOT receive more than two (2) consecutive estimated bills where the company has access to the meter.

The Guaranteed Standards are performance measures that guide the provision of utility services delivered by the JPS, the National Water Commission and small water providers. Presently, there are a total of seventeen (17) Standards which measure service delivery in the areas of: access to service, investigation of customer complaints, billing, metering, disconnection and reconnection of service.

Director of Consumer and Public Affairs, Yvonne Nicholson says although customers will no longer have to claim for breaches, they should continue to be vigilant and responsive in identifying any breaches and hold the utility provider accountable. “In the latter part of 2015, JPS identified that although it committed breaches valued at over \$132 million dollars, they paid out only \$36 million dollars. This is because customers were not claiming. With the full conversion to automatic status, customers will no longer have to submit a written claim, but we encourage them to remain vigilant,” she said.

Copies of all Guaranteed Standards can be found on the OUR’s website, www.our.org.jm, or at any of the utility companies’ customer service centres islandwide.

---30---

CONTACT: Yvonne Nicholson, Director, Consumer and Public Affairs, 968-6053

BACKGROUND

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) established the Guaranteed Standards Scheme for JPS in 2002 to ensure that the company meets minimum service levels requirements to its customers. Prior to 2009, the standards were reviewed every five (5) years, to coincide with the rate review. However, based on requests received from customers for more frequent reviews, the OUR in its 2009 Tariff Determination implemented mid-tariff reviews on the guaranteed standards.

JPS’ breaches of the Guaranteed Standards and payout for the June-December 2015 period is in the table below.

JPS June – December 2015	
Breaches	68,838
Potential Pay-out	\$132.6 million
Actual Pay-out	\$36 million
Unclaimed & Unpaid Compensation	\$96.6 million

--30--