



Ref: RIC/ 01/2010

Thursday 25th February 2010

For Immediate Release

**RIC MOVES TO PROTECT ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS
WITH NEW PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

As the regulatory body for the electricity transmission and distribution sector, the Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) is empowered to prescribe standards of service, monitor the service provider to ensure compliance and impose sanctions for non-compliance. The RIC's commitment to protecting consumers in this regard is particularly evident by its action to establish performance standards, for example Quality of Service Standards (QSS) for the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC).

The Quality of Service Standards were first introduced in 2004 after the RIC held discussions with all stakeholders through its consultative process. There are two types of standards: Guaranteed Electricity Standards (GES) and Overall Electricity Standards (OES). The revised standards have been gazetted and are now law. They became effective on **December 31, 2009**. As indicated, failure to meet Guaranteed Standards requires a specific payment to be made to the affected customer. The revised standards have seen several improvements over the older standards, for example the:

- i. Amount of **compensatory or penalty payment has been increased** from \$30.00 to \$50.00 (residential) per breach in most cases.
- ii. **Compensatory payments are now automatic** for breaches under all Guaranteed Standards, except one. This means that the customers do not have to submit a claim.

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- iii. Payment will be in the form of a **credit on the customer's billing account** based on the set amounts and/or guidelines indicated for each breached standard.
- iv. Inclusion of a number of **new standards based on customers' concerns**.
- v. **Appropriate level** against which T&TEC's performance is compared has been **increased** in most cases.

The new Guaranteed and Overall Electricity Standards with the required performance levels and the associated penalty payments for breaches are shown in Tables 1 and 2 (attached) and will be made available on the RIC's website.

With the introduction of the QSS and the RIC's rigorous monitoring and enforcement of the standards, it is anticipated that consumer expectations of consistency, reliability and accountability would be met or exceeded by the service provider with consumers being empowered as a result of being made aware of their rights.

End of Release

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Notes to Editors:

The Quality of Service Standards introduced by the RIC establish the performance standards by which T&TEC is evaluated and is based on two dimensions: Guaranteed Electricity Standards (GES) and Overall Electricity Standards (OES).

Table 1 - Guaranteed Electricity Standards (GES) – set the service levels that must be met in each individual case.

Standard	Description	Required Performance Level	Penalty Payments
GES1	Restoration of supply after unplanned outage on the distribution system.	Within 10 hours.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential For each further 12-hour period – \$60 residential \$600 non-residential
GES2	Billing punctuality. Time for first bill to be mailed after service connection.	Within 60 days residential. Within 30 days non-residential.	\$50 for both residential and non-residential
GES3	Reconnection of service after settling of overdue amounts or agreement on payment schedule.	Within 24 hours.	Refund of reconnection fee for both residential and non-residential
GES4	Making and keeping appointments.	24 hours notice of inability to keep an appointment with customers.	\$50 for both residential and non-residential
GES5	Investigation of voltage complaints.	Visit within 24 hours. Correct within 15 working days.	\$50 residential \$600 non-residential
GES6	Responding to billing and payment queries.	Substantive reply within 15 working days.	\$50 residential and non-residential
GES7	New connection of supply.	Within 3 working days.	\$50 for both residential and non-residential
GES8	Payments owed under guaranteed standards.	Within 30 working days for non-residential and 60 days for residential.	\$50 for both residential and non-residential

Table 2 - Overall Electricity Standards (OES) – deal with situations where it is in appropriate to provide individual guarantees, but where customers have a right to expect minimum levels of service.

Standard	Description	
OES1	Frequency of meter reading.	(a) 90% of industrial meters read every month. (b) 90% of residential and commercial meters read according to schedule.
OES2	Billing and punctuality. Mailing of bills after meter reading.	98% of the bills to be mailed within 10 working days after meter reading.
OES3	Responding to meter problems.	Visit or substantive reply within 10 working days 95% of the time.
OES4	Prior notice of planned interruptions.	3 days advance notice of planned outages 100% of the time.
OES5	Street lights maintenance.	Repair 100% of failed street lights with the exception of highway lighting within 7 working days. Repairing 100% of failed highway lighting within 14 working days.
OES6	Response to customer queries/requests (written)	Substantive response within 10 working days and communicating final position within 30 working days.
OES7	Notifying customers of receipt of claim under guaranteed standard GES1.	100% of customers to be notified of receipt of claim within 10 working days.