COMPLAINTS CORNER

How do I sort out problems with the Service Provider?

You must first contact your Service Provider and explain that you wish to make a complaint. You can do this in a number of ways:

- IN PERSON
- BY TELEPHONE
- BY EMAIL

If you are complaining by phone:
- Make a note of what you want to say before you call
- Be clear about how you want the problem to be sorted out
- Have any relevant documents on hand – such as bills or letters from your service provider
- Have a notebook ready and write down the name of the person you speak to, the date and time of call and what was said
- If you complain by phone, you should try to follow up your call with a letter, especially if your complaint is serious

FOR ALL CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS: CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT Tel: 800-4-RIC(4742)

NAME | POSITION | EXTENSION
--- | --- | ---
Mahmood Choudrie | Customer Services Manager | 253
Daramdeo Maharaj | Customer Services Rep. | 253
Kareem Mangru | Customer Services Rep. | 254
Graham Abraham | Customer Services Rep. | 255

Do you know that if your electricity supply is not restored within 12 hours after an unplanned outage that you are entitled to a rebate on your bill?

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

A phone call away

There when you need us. The RIC is in full support of all free speech initiatives since we function in a transparent manner and encourage all stakeholders to participate in the regulatory decision-making process through public consultations. As such, we are available for discussion and clarification on issues that require clarification. It is neither to mislead or affect regulatory functions of any of the service providers under our purview. The RIC personnel who can be contacted are as follows:

NAME | POSITION | EXTENSION | ISSUE
--- | --- | --- | ---
Majinder S. Atwal | Executive Director | 321 | All issues
Garvin Alexander | Assistant Executive Director, Technical Operations | 351 | T&T EC Rate Review
Claudio Eyre | Tariff Analyst | 344 | T&T EC Rate Review
Carol Barlasun | Tariff Analyst | 345 | T&T EC Rate Review
Gordon Wyke | Standards Engineer | 354 | WASA

RIC NEWS WELCOMES YOUR VIEWS & COMMENTS.

Contact Ms. Denise Cassar - Corporate Communications Coordinator
E-Mail: ccassar@ric.org.tt

RIC NEWS ISSUE 2

Regulated Industries Commission
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VOLUME 3

Assuring QUALITY OF SERVICE

The Quality of Service Standards (QoS) for the Electrical Transmission and Distribution Sector, which were launched in April 2004, are a major initiative of the Regulated Industries Commission (RIC). The QoS seek to ensure that consumer expectations of consistency, reliability, and accountability from the service providers are met and/or exceeded.

The QoS establish standards by which the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) is evaluated. A performance report is prepared annually and is based on two dimensions: Guaranteed Standards (GES) and Overall Standards (OES). A summary of T&TEC’s performance during the period April 2004 – December 2005 is being assessed in this report.

PARA: • Residential Customers NOT being subsidized by Industrial & Commercial Customers
PARA: • Water Sector focus at OOCUR Conference in Grenada
PARA: • RIC chairman appointed Chairman of OOCUR
PARA: • Save Money on your next Electricity Bill
PARA: • Watt U Need to Know
Assuring QUALITY OF SERVICE

GUARANTEED STANDARDS (GES)

With respect to the Guaranteed Standards, T&TEC has under performed in GESI, which requires T&TEC to respond and restore supply after an unplanned outage within 12 hours. There was full compliance with two standards (GET-4: Making and Keeping Appointments and GESI - 5 - Time to Credit Compensatory Payments), with no breaches for the period under review. In the case of the GESI 5 - Time to Credit Compensatory Payments, T&TEC was able to achieve compliance largely due to the fact that customers had not been claiming when breaches occurred – 25,145 breaches occurred under the GESI in 2005. Based on the number of breaches, the RIC estimates that compensatory payments of approximately $755,000.00 would have been due to customers, with claims being made and payments being certified and approved.

OVERALL STANDARDS (OES)

In terms of the OES, there is room for improvement in a number of areas. T&TEC must enhance its billing punctuality, by ensuring that bills are mailed within 10 working days after a meter has been read or estimated (OES 4), give 3 days advance notice of planned outages (OES 5), and respond to all voltage complaints (OES 9) within 24 hours and rectify those within 15 working days, as part of its commitment to the OES 9 - System losses and OES 4 - Correction of High/Low Voltage are needed, and these have been identified in the Final Determination and are linked to an incentive scheme to ensure that they are consistently maintained.

In protecting the interests of customers, the RIC will ensure that the service provider makes a concerted effort to increase customer awareness of the process. All customers of T&TEC are entitled to guaranteed standards of service and the RIC will continue to collaborate and hold discussions with T&TEC on those standards that pose a challenge.

Remember, it’s your responsibility to notify services and ensure that T&TEC complies with the Quality of Service Standards and that T&TEC is held accountable for any breaches of these standards. GET INVOLVED, TAKE CHARGE. The RIC cannot do it alone. Consumers must play an active part and assume the role of Individual Regulators. With the RIC serving as your voice, together we can make improvements in the Quality of Service delivered to you the customer.

RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICITY CUSTOMERS NOT BEING SUBSIDIZED BY INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS

In the face of rising concern that industrial and commercial customers are being made to subsidize the residential customers, the RIC wants to dispel this mistaken belief in the wake of Government’s announcement that the new electricity rates would be implemented for Industrial and Commercial Customers effective from November 01, 2006. Public Utilities and the environment Minister Winifred Becky stated “Government will advise on the implementation of the new electricity rates for industrial customers at a future date.” Although in principle the logic for cross-subsidization appears sound, in its Final Determination, the RIC acknowledged the inappropriateess of such unwarranted and excessive cross subsidies.

In preparing its Final Determination on the Regulation of Electricity Transmission and Distribution, the RIC considered the impact of its pricing decisions on customers, the rate of inflation and the country’s competitiveness. It should be noted that the impact on industrial and commercial customers was only dependent on their levels of usage as they are much more diverse in terms of their usage patterns. However, a thorough investigation was conducted and revealed that any likely infinitesimal impact would be minimal. Furthermore, the contribution of increased costs of electricity would also have a minimal impact on the total operating expenses of different industries in the country, given the small share of electricity costs in the total operating costs of most industries and commercial institutions. In acknowledging the minimal impact, the Manufacturers Association of Trinidad and Tobago indicated that the implementation of the new electricity rates will affect 1% of Operating Costs of supermarkets.

The RIC also launched a major initiative for improving the quality of service in the country. The Quality of Service Standards (QSS) forms part of a new system for regulating public utilities with the intention of ensuring that consumer expectations of consistency, reliability and accountability in electricity services are met or exceeded. It is your responsibilities as customers to monitor services and ensure that T&TEC complies with the Quality of Service Standards and that T&TEC is held accountable for any breaches of those standards. The RIC will continue to take a public stand and assume an active role in shaping the future of the electricity transmission and distribution sector.

Let’s RIConcile - CASE STUDY

The case of Reconcile is an excellent example of how the RIC works to resolve a dispute and that this is exactly what this feature of the newsletter is intended to do. The RIC’s Conciliators are trained to present an actual scenario and disclose the steps taken by the RIC to resolve the issue. The names of all parties involved have been omitted to respect confidentiality. This is the first of an ongoing series that will highlight the RIC’s role as a responsible regulator in protecting consumer interests.

CASE: A customer of T&TEC from the Eastern Area visited the RIC regarding his dissatisfaction with the Service Provider’s response to a billing query. He indicated that his account was being billed under a meter multiplier of 2 from the date he received an electricity connection in 1996. The customer’s neighbours were being billed at a multiplier of 1, even though their supply was from the same transformer bank. Checks conducted by the customer revealed that his bills were double that of his neighbours with similar appliances. The customer requested a rebate for the charges for the entire 4 year period from T&TEC. However, T&TEC subsequently advised the customer that the credit would be limited to a period of one year based on their Retrospective Billing Policy.

SOLUTION: The RIC examined T&TEC’s policy regarding retroactive billing and identified that the limit of one year is based on the assumption that the adjustment of the multiplier or credit on the consumer’s part. In this case T&TEC was culpable by not billing the customer accurately and as such the policy did not apply.

RESULTS: The case was referred to the RIC’s legal officer and it was determined that T&TEC was obligated by law to compensate the customer for a period of four years based on the “Limitation of Certain Actions Act 2000”. T&TEC was advised of the RIC’s position. T&TEC complied with the advice to extend the period of retroactivity to the statutory period of four years. Interest was also paid to the customer for the period.

LESSONS LEARNED: The lessons learned from the case are:

- Always do your homework – Don’t take information provided as final.
- Seek advice from a learned professional in the relevant field if you are uncertain about an issue.

New RIC-ruits - Appointments

KAREN ECCLES - Dynamic

Graduated from the University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Studies in early 2004 with a Masters of Information Studies degree (MIS), specializing in Library Information studies. On her return to Trinidad she was appointed librarian at the Arts Public Library which she managed for a year and in early 2005 was appointed Librarian II at the Ministry of Finance, Island Revenue Division. Currently she holds the position of Librarian at the Regulated Industries Commission.

GERARD BENJAMIN - Versatile

Attended the School of Accountancy and Management where he attained a BSc. in Computing and Information Systems from the University of London (External Programme). Gerard was previously employed with CableNet, Fujitsu-IL, Overit Caribbean Limited, Alpha Caribbean and Unilever. He is the IT Specialist at the Regulated Industries Commission.

This column provides an opportunity for you to get all your legal questions answered by a qualified attorney-at-law attached to the RIC. If you have a question, it can be directed to us at ricoffice ric.org.tt and the answer would be featured in the next issue.

QUESTION: Why are Consultations important to you?

ANSWER: Consultations is a process of communication between entities on an issue, prior to making a decision or determining a direction on the issue. Once a decision is made that affects an individual’s rights or position in society, the individual should be given the opportunity to express his views on that issue and consultations facilitate this.
UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH

DARAMDEO MAHARAJ

1. Three words or phrases that best describe my personality:
   Honest – Honesty is the key to one's integrity. I believe that one must be honourable in principles, intentions and actions in order to gain respect and achieve credibility.
   Industrious – I believe that hard work and perseverance bring great success. In order to achieve your goals in life and over come challenges one must be diligent and industrious.
   Fair and Impartial - I believe in giving everyone an opportunity to prove themselves. One must not make decisions based on "hearsay" or hearing from one side of the story. The decisions you make must be from bias and dishonestly.

2. My current job and what I love about it:
   Customer Service Representative (CSR): Firstly, it gives me great satisfaction to know that I have assisted customers/consumers who are dissatisfied with the level of service from Service Providers (NASA & T&T).

3. My personal credo and how it strengthens my role and responsibility here at the RIC:
   "When work is a pleasure life is a joy." I believe that in order for an individual to have true job satisfaction he must enjoy what he is doing. Work must not become burdensome or boring so I take a positive approach to my duties and responsibilities at the RIC, which is also transmitted in my relationships and interactions outside of the office environment.

4. An out-of-the-ordinary skill you might not know about me:
   I'm "Mr Fix It" at home. Anything electrical, mechanical, plumbing and woodworking that warrant repairs I try to fix. The challenge to trouble shoot and repair stuff is exhilarating.

5. The one person I most admire and why:
   Mahatma K. Gandhi
   I hold Mahatma Gandhi in the highest esteem. He was a simple and modest man who remained committed to his principles and faith even in the most extreme situations. Gandhi's philosophy on Truth, Peace, Nonviolence and Love is an example to all and his teachings have inspired popular civil rights leaders.

6. My friends would say:
   That I am humble, conscientious and always willing to help. My friends would also say that I am a meticulous individual and non-judgemental in nature.

TAP in to this...

The Social Action Plan is a plan developed by the RIC to provide the foundation for comprehensive and on-going initiatives to protect consumers, concentrating on specific programmes intended for low income and vulnerable groups. It focuses on what priority action will be concentrated by the RIC and also sets out the contributions expected from the Service Providers, while seeking to ensure that the social issues are fully considered in both the water and electricity sectors.

At times, we are all guilty of wasting water. By making a few small changes to your habits, you can help save water.

WATER SAVING TIPS:

- Use a bowl for washing vegetables and dishes;
- Don’t leave the tap running whilst brushing your teeth; and
- Fix leaking taps - A running tap could use up to nine litres of water a day.

Quirks:

- Better to understand a little than to misunderstand a lot.

RIC CHAIRMAN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF OOCUR

Professor Dennis Pantin

The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) is pleased to publicly acknowledge the appointment of our Chairman Professor Dennis Pantin, Head of the Economics Department, University of the West Indies, and the current Chairman of the Organization of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OOCUR).

RIC focuses on WATER SECTOR at OOCUR Conference in Grenada

The year marked the fourth annual conference of the Organization of Caribbean Utility Regulators (OOCUR) and showcased the work of regulators from around the region. The 3-day conference addressed "The Challenges of Public Utilities in a Regulatory Environment" and was staged from 8-10 November 2009 at the Grenadian Rex Resorts of Grenada. OOCUR is a non-profit organization that was established to facilitate the conducting of research, training, development and the comprehension of regulatory issues. The OOCUR conferences ultimately provide an opportunity for regional regulators to network, while sharing information and experience.

The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) focuses on matters pertaining to the Water and Wastewater sector with the Chairman, Professor Dennis Pantin, leading a presentation on, "The Challenges of Public Utilities in a Regulatory Environment." The conference also featured a presentation by Gordon Wyke, Standards Engineer, on the theme "Sizing Water Distribution in T&T: The Development of Universal Metering as a Strategic Option" while Claudia Bjon examined "Management Incentives and the Water Sector in T&T." Taking a theoretical perspective and making the appropriate application, Carol Barkmar expanded on "The Applicability of the "Gas Cymru Model" to the Reform of the Water Sector in T&T, From Government to Governance." The presentations all detailed initiatives that could possibly transform the Water And Sewage Authority (NASA), making it a more efficient and viable entity.

Working Groups

RIC presents Terms of Reference to T&TEC Rate Review Working Groups

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association (TTMA), Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (TTC) and the RIC. The primary function of these Working Groups is to assist the RIC in developing the detailed proposals for the RIC’s consideration. This initiative exemplifies the RIC’s commitment to fulfilling its mandate to protect consumer interests while simultaneously ensuring that service providers have adequate resources, to provide the highest quality of service to all customers.

On Friday 22nd September 2006, the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment hosted a Staff Recognition and Appreciation function to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of staff at the Ministry as well as personnel in other institutions that fall under the purview of the Ministry. The RIC’s own Gordon Wyke was the proud recipient of an award in the category of National Contribution. We warmly congratulate Gordon on his award!
FOR RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS, CONSERVING ELECTRICITY HAS BECOME ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT.
TO CONSERVE ENERGY, A CUSTOMER CAN SEEK OUT WAYS TO USE ELECTRICITY MORE EFFICIENTLY.
Here Are Some Ways To Reduce Your Electricity Consumption And Lower Your Bill Without Spending A Lot Of Money.

- **UNPLUG** - Unplug your chargers when you’re not charging. Most houses are full of little plastic power supplies to charge cell phones, PDAs, digital cameras, cordless tools and other personal gadgets. Keep them unplugged until you need them.
- **REFRIGERATOR** - Do not open your refrigerator door needlessly. By getting into the habit of removing and replacing several articles at once, you will reduce the loss of cold air.
- **ELECTRIC STOVES** - Use a pressure cooker to conserve energy when cooking foods that take a long time, such as stews.
- **MICROWAVE OVENS** - Use your microwave oven to cook small to medium quantities of food. To cook larger portions of meat, it is better to use a conventional oven.
- **LIGHTING** - Turn off lights when not in use or when leaving a room. Use “task lighting” rather than lighting the whole room unnecessarily for those who work.

Are you dissatisfied with the quality of T&TEC’s service?

**YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

If you have a complaint about your electricity service, it is in your interest to file a written complaint with T&TEC. It’s up to you to monitor services and ensure that T&TEC complies with the Quality of Service Standards and that T&TEC is held accountable for any breaches of these standards.

**Get Involved, Take Charge.**

Contact T&TEC’s Trouble Report Service at your District Office or visit the nearest Customer Service Centre.

**WATT U NEED TO KNOW**

‘Knowledge is Power.’ – The following chart shows the average wattage and the approximate number of kilowatt-hours (kWh) used in two months by some common appliances. It can serve as a useful guide and assist you the consumer in adjusting your consumption and usage accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLIANCE</th>
<th>Average Wattage</th>
<th>Estimated Hours Used</th>
<th>Est. kWh Consumed</th>
<th>Bi-Monthly Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothes Dryer</td>
<td>6600</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>58.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD Player</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Cassette Recorder</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>180.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum Cleaner</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Cooker</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettle</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Drill</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:**

1. The bi-monthly cost excludes VAT and customer charge.
2. The bi-monthly cost is calculated based on the new prices at the lowest tier of 27 cents per kWh (kilowatt-hour).