

REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

# RIC NEWS

April – June, 2020

ISSUE 2  
VOLUME: 17



## HOW TO SAVE ENERGY (AND SAVE MONEY) WHILE AT HOME

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**REGULATED  
INDUSTRIES  
COMMISSION** 

*Protecting YOUR Interests*

# Quarterly Complaints Report

## Consumer Complaints Get Resolved

### RIC'S COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR **2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER 2020**

Status	APR -20	MAY -20	JUN-20
Number of complaints received	133	228	238
Number of complaints resolved	101	144	133
Number of complaints unresolved	32	84	105
Resolution rate for complaints received	76%	63%	56%

**REBATE / COMPENSATION AWARDED  
TO CUSTOMERS BETWEEN APR – JUN, 2020**

**\$6,960.00**

### **OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE TO YOU – THE RIC WILL:**

- Conduct an investigation to obtain all the necessary facts both from you and the Service Provider.  
(Copies of all relevant information that would assist us in understanding the complaint should be provided.)
- Respond to your written, telephone and email complaints within ten (10) working days of receipt.
- Forward our response to your complaint to the Service Provider and then provide written confirmation of action taken.
- Keep you up-to-date on the progress of our investigation of your complaint and its resolution.
- Ensure that you are attended to by a Customer Service Representative within ten (10) minutes of your appointment time.

**IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT, YOU MUST FIRST MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SERVICE PROVIDERS (I.E. WASA AND T&TEC)  
AND GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM**

#37 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain, Trinidad, WI  
P.O. Box 1001

Tel: 800-4RIC (4742) • Fax: 624-2027

Website: [www.ric.org.tt](http://www.ric.org.tt) Email: [complaints@ric.org.tt](mailto:complaints@ric.org.tt)

**REGULATED  
INDUSTRIES  
COMMISSION** 

Protecting *YOUR* Interests

# RIC LIMITS WALK-IN CUSTOMERS

www.ric.org.tt



REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

*Protecting YOUR Interests*

## ARE YOU DISSATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OR PROGRESS OF COMPLAINTS YOU HAVE LODGED WITH WASA OR T&TEC?

*If so, the RIC is here to help you!*

Customers who wish to lodge a complaint with the RIC can do so via:

TOLL-FREE NUMBER



800-4RIC

EMAIL



complaints@ric.org.tt

WEBSITE



www.ric.org.tt/  
complaints-form/

FACEBOOK



Regulated Industries  
Commission

The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC), in adherence to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's guidelines on the COVID-19 pandemic, will be limiting walk-in customers to our complaints redress services at this time.

The RIC is committed to maintaining its level of service to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago as the country attempts to reduce the risk of infection and slow the spread of COVID-19.

#37 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain, Trinidad, W.I. P.O. Box 1001  
Tel: 800-4RIC (4742), 627-7820, 627-0821; 627-0503; 625-5384  
Fax: 624-2027  
Website: www.ric.org.tt Email: ricoffice@ric.org.tt

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**The harness and use of energy resources is a key factor in the development of civilization, and an essential part of modern living. Every day, we use energy for powering our homes, industries, and transportation systems. How efficiently we use the available energy will affect our ability to sustain a good quality of life for years to come.**

# HOW TO SAVE ENERGY (AND SAVE MONEY) WHILE AT HOME

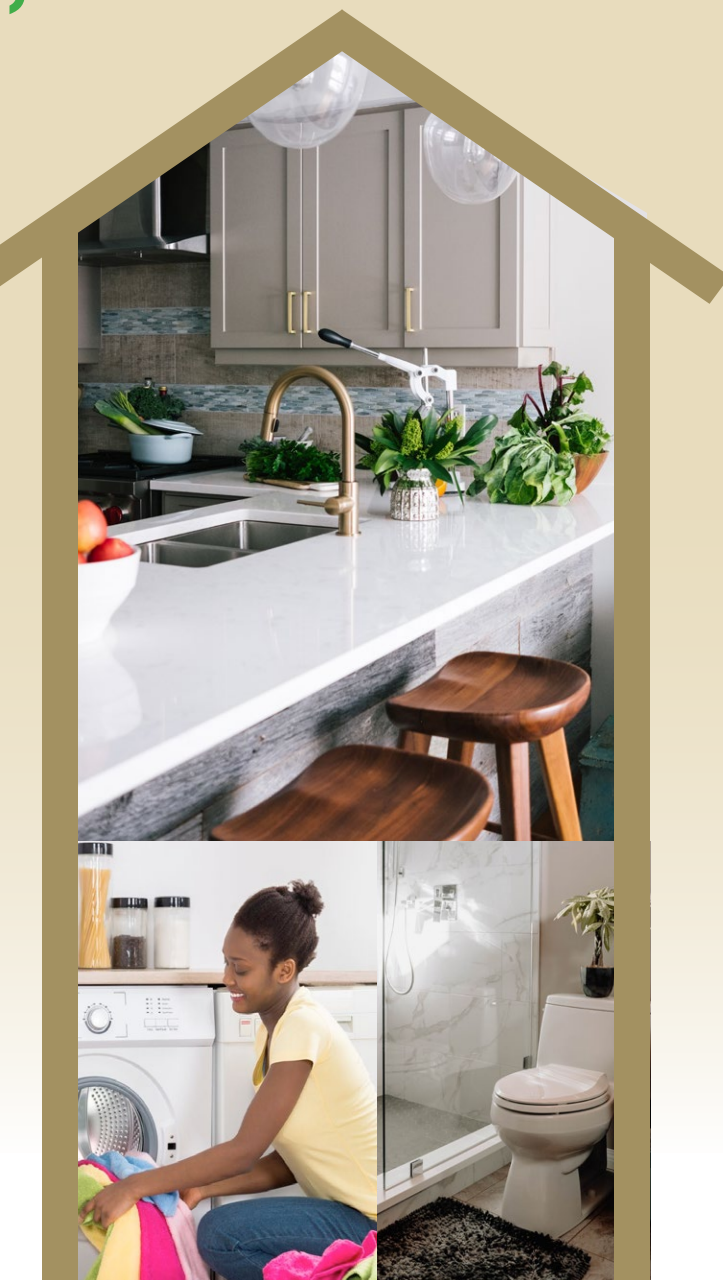
The average amount of electricity consumed at home in Trinidad and Tobago is relatively high. In 2017, residential electricity consumption in Trinidad and Tobago (population 1.3 million) 240MWh was more than the combined residential consumption of Jamaica, Suriname, Curaçao, Caymen Islands, Guyana, US Virgin Islands, Belize, St. Lucia and Bahamas (total population 5.5 million, consumption 237 MWh).

Thus, Energy Conservation at home can contribute to reducing Trinidad and Tobago's high demand for energy. Every residential consumer has the power to make a positive impact by saving energy at home. Also, improving energy efficiency at home reduces the need and cost for acquiring additional generation capacity. The energy consumed in Trinidad and Tobago comes from burning our finite natural gas and oil resources. The use of Renewable Energy Sources is a step towards a cleaner, greener, and healthier future.

This article explores Renewable Resources, Energy Conservation, and Energy Efficiency and discusses issues relevant to the residential consumer. It also presents practical advice that can result in cost savings for these consumers. The cost estimations shown are based on appliance usage patterns observed in typical households. The average wattage (power requirement) for an appliance is presented along with the approximate hours of usage during the two-month billing cycle and these values form the basis for calculating the estimated amount of kilowatthours (kWh) and bi-monthly cost.

## What is Renewable Energy?

Renewable energy uses energy sources that are continually replenished by nature — the sun, the wind, water, the earth's heat, and plants. Renewable energy



technologies turn these fuels into usable forms of energy — most often electricity, but also heat, chemicals, or mechanical power.

## Why use Renewable Energy?

The combustion of hydrocarbons, such as oil and natural gas, produce gases that contribute to global warming. The use of renewable energy technologies is referred to as “clean” or “green” because they produce few if any harmful emissions. By increasing the use of renewable energy the negative impacts on the environment can be reduced. About 40 percent of energy from natural resources is used for electricity, which means that our resources are used more for that purpose than for any other. According to the United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency, approximately 30% of the energy consumption in commercial buildings is either inefficient or unnecessary.

## Using Renewable Resources

### Solar Water Heating

Solar energy can be used to heat water for your residential needs. Most solar water-heating systems consist of a solar collector and a water storage tank. Replacing a 30-gallon Water Heater with solar water heating will reduce yearly electricity consumption by approximately 7,560kWh. The corresponding yearly savings of \$1,965.60 is currently estimated to payback for the installation cost of the new system in 5 years with further saving benefits over the remainder of the system’s useful life (at least 10 years) and will also provide security against rising electricity costs.

### Solar Photovoltaic Electricity

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation is one of the fastest-growing forms of renewable energy. PV panels are used to power a diverse range of equipment, from small devices to entire homes to utility-scale operations. Currently, in Trinidad and Tobago, application is limited to off-grid uses such as standalone lighting devices, powering remote buildings, and a few pilot projects. At present, consumers do not pay the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) for electricity produced from such installations. However, persons should confirm what is permitted with T&TEC and the Government Electrical Inspectorate before acquiring any electricity generating system.

### Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles use an electric motor and battery pack for propulsion. They are over three times more energy-efficient than traditional internal combustion engines. They also need less maintenance, making them much cheaper to operate, and more friendly to the environment over their lifetime. They are especially suited for the majority of the motoring experience in Trinidad and Tobago, which is characterized

by frequent short distance commute. However, the upfront cost of ownership is higher, and local options for recharging the vehicle’s battery away from home are presently limited.

## Save Money by Saving Energy

### Consumption Expenses for Common Household Appliances

This listing ranks the appliances that are commonly used by residential customers in terms of Consumption Expense in decreasing order. Customers may have more than one of these appliances, hence, the electricity consumed may then be greater than the amounts shown and is also dependent on the usage pattern of the appliance.

Appliance	Average Wattage (Watts)	Est. Hours Used Bi-Monthly	Est. Kwh Consumed Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly Cost (Dollars)
Refrigerator Auto Defrost 22 cu ft	620	480.0	297.60	\$77.38
Clothes Dryer	6,600	33.0	217.80	\$56.63
Air Conditioner 5,150 BTU	530	400.0	212.00	\$55.12
Freezer Auto Defrost 15 cu ft	440	480.0	211.20	\$54.91
Television Plasma 42"	330	370.0	122.10	\$31.75
Shower Heater	3,000	27.0	81.00	\$21.06
Television Flat Screen 27"	180	370	66.60	\$17.32
Electric Range (Oven)	12,500	5.0	62.50	\$16.25
Water Pump (1/2 hp)	440	96.0	42.24	\$10.98
Fan (ceiling)	80	400.0	38.40	\$9.98
Toaster Oven	1,550	20.0	31.00	\$8.06
Electric Kettle	1,500	20.0	30.00	\$7.80
Fan (circulating-16")	60	400.0	28.80	\$7.49
Computer with 5 speaker Sound System	300	75.0	22.50	\$5.85
Iron	1,200	16.0	19.20	\$4.99
Washing Machine Auto (20 lbs)	512	33.0	16.90	\$4.39
Stereo	100	164.0	16.40	\$4.26
Microwave Oven (0.6 cu ft)	700	22.0	15.40	\$4.00
Computer with Printer	200	75.0	15.00	\$3.90

To determine the cost of running appliances:

$$\frac{(\text{Wattage} \times \text{hours used})}{1,000} = \text{kWh}$$

$$\text{kWh} \times \text{cost per kWh} = \text{Usage Cost}$$

The bi-monthly cost per kWh calculated for residential customers is based on the current rate at the lowest tier of 0.26 TTD per kWh and excludes VAT and the fixed minimal customer charge. Residential customers’ consumption is currently billed in three tiers:

1-400kWh	@ 0.26TTD/kWh;
401-1000kWh	@ 0.32TTD/kWh;
>1000kWh	@ 0.37TTD/kWh.

**Top 4 Highest Energy Consuming Residential Devices**

Appliance	Average Wattage (Watts)	Est. Hours Used Bi-Monthly	Est. Kwh Consumed Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly Cost (Dollars)
Swimming Pool Filter Motor	1,500	1,440.0	2,160.00	\$561.60
Central Air Conditioner 2.5 tons	3,500	400.0	1,400.00	\$364.00
Water Heater 30 gallon	4,500	280.0	1,260.00	\$327.60
Air Conditioner 12,000 BTU	1,500	400.0	600.00	\$156.00

**Conservation Tips**

**Unplug seldom-used appliances, such as an extra refrigerator.** This can reduce your estimated kWh consumption by 1,785.60kWh / \$686.40 per year or greater (if the model is an older inefficient model.)

Most homes continually have chargers for cell phones, digital cameras, cordless tools, and other personal gadgets plugged in even when not in use. Use power strips (which protect and allow multiple devices to be plugged in) to easily switch off televisions, home theatre entertainment, cable boxes, DVD players, stereos, and chargers when not in use. A household’s standby and off-mode power can amount to approximately 440kWh / \$114.40 per year.

**Make informed appliance purchases.** You can reduce the electricity bill by using high-efficiency large appliances and air conditioning equipment. While these models may be more expensive to buy than comparable models with lower or average efficiency, the savings will put money back into your pocket long before the appliance needs to be replaced. E.g. New energy-efficient refrigerator models can result in savings of about 800kWh / \$208.00 per year over 20-year-old models.

Two processes that consume a lot of energy in the house are the cooling of living spaces (air conditioning) or food storage (refrigerators and freezers) and the heating of water for various domestic purposes or the heating of air in clothes dryers. Any attempts to conserve energy in these activities will result in significant savings.

**Lighting.** Replace incandescent bulbs and compact fluorescent bulbs with L.E.D. bulbs. L.E.D.s use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last approximately 25 times longer.

Turn off lights when not in use or when leaving a room. Use “task lighting” (lamps, etc.) for close work rather than lighting the whole room unnecessarily.

**Kitchen.** Refrigerator temperatures should be kept between 2°C and 5°C and freezer temperatures between -15°C and -18°C. Use smaller kitchen appliances instead of the electric range depending on the size of the meal being prepared.



**Space Cooling.** The use of high-efficiency air conditioners and measures to reduce cooling loads can reduce energy use by 20-50%. The use of one circulating 16” fan in a room size between 100-150 sq. ft. rather than a 5,150 BTU air conditioner unit can result in savings of about 1,128kWh / \$293.28 per year. Keep air-conditioned rooms closed and curtains pulled across windows as this will save energy.

Appliance	Average Wattage (Watts)	Est. Hours Used Bi-Monthly	Est. Kwh Consumed Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly Cost (Dollars)
Lighting 100W x 10 (incandescent)	1,000	600.0	600.00	\$156.00
Lighting 18W x 10 (100W equivalent L.E.D)	180	600.0	108.00	\$28.08
<b>BI-MONTHLY SAVINGS BY REPLACING 10 INCANDESCENT BULBS WITH L.E.D. BULBS</b>			<b>492.00</b>	<b>\$127.92</b>

**Laundry.** Wash full loads. Keep the lint screen in the dryer clean. Remove clothes promptly from the dryer and fold them, many items will require no ironing or just a quick press.

**Other appliances.** Don't leave computers in standby for an extended period of time – turn off if they are not being used. When vacuuming, empty, or replace the dust bag frequently.



## Energy Saving Word Search

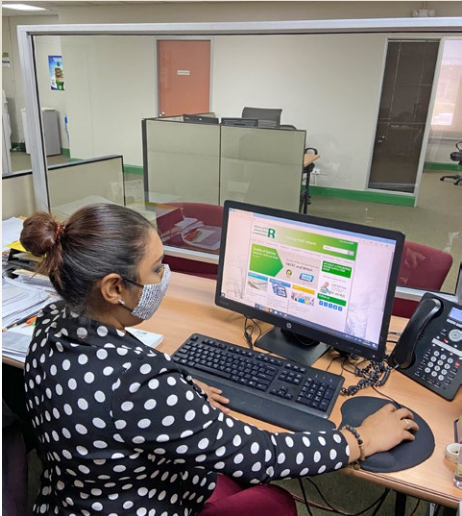


Find the 15 words in the grid below - they go up, down and diagonally.



Switch off	Light bulb	Standby
Fossil fuels	Carbon dioxide	Climate change
Low energy	Insulation	Efficient technology
Heat loss	Global warming	Appliances
Smart meter	Power station	Electricity

# RIC'S NEW COVID-19 MEASURES THE NEW NORMAL AT THE RIC



Ms. Shelly Soonachan from the Customer Services Department is seen behind the glass barriers that were set up in the RIC's Customer Service area to safeguard both customers and staff from the possible spread of COVID-19.



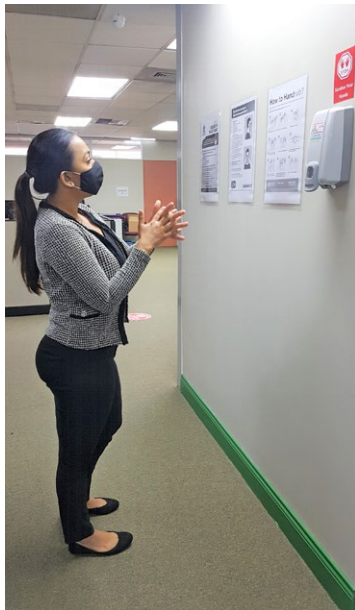
Ms. Suzette Boodoo, Receptionist, checking all mail received at the reception area to ensure that it is properly sanitized before distribution.

Wall-mounted  
Sanitising Stations

Temperature  
Check Station

Social Distancing &  
Mask Wearing

Sneeze  
Guards



Ms. Darcel Silva from the Corporate Communications Department utilises one of the wall-mounted hand sanitiser dispensers that were placed throughout the RIC's office.



Mr. Daramdeo Maharaj from the Customer Services Department is about to join an online meeting as all meetings at the RIC are now hosted using online meeting platforms.



Ms. Wendy Jack, Office Attendant, is being screened at the temperature check station as all RIC staff are required to have their temperature checked on their arrival at work.