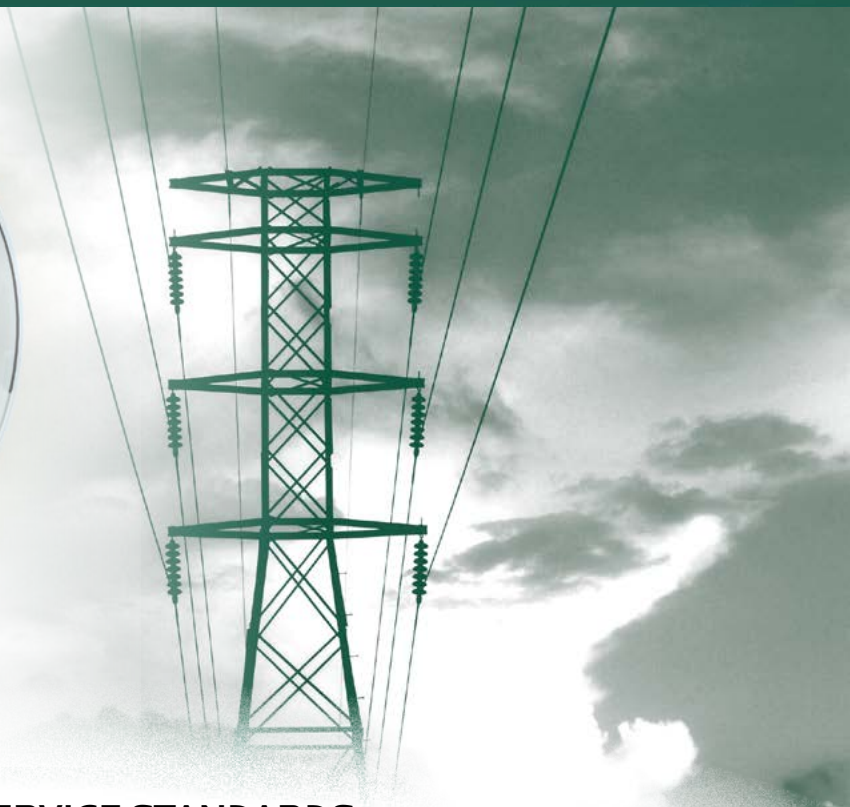


REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

# RIC NEWS

July – September, 2021

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QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS  
FOR THE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION SECTOR

## RAISING THE STANDARDS

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*Protecting YOUR Interests*

# Quarterly Complaints Report

## Consumer Complaints Resolved

### RIC'S COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR 3rd QUARTER 2021

Status	JUL -21	AUG -21	SEP-21
Number of complaints received	155	219	351
Number of complaints resolved	80	113	227
Number of complaints unresolved	75	106	124
Resolution rate for complaints received	52%	52%	65%

**REBATE / COMPENSATION AWARDED  
TO CUSTOMERS BETWEEN JUL – SEP, 2021**

**\$1,512.00**

### 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)

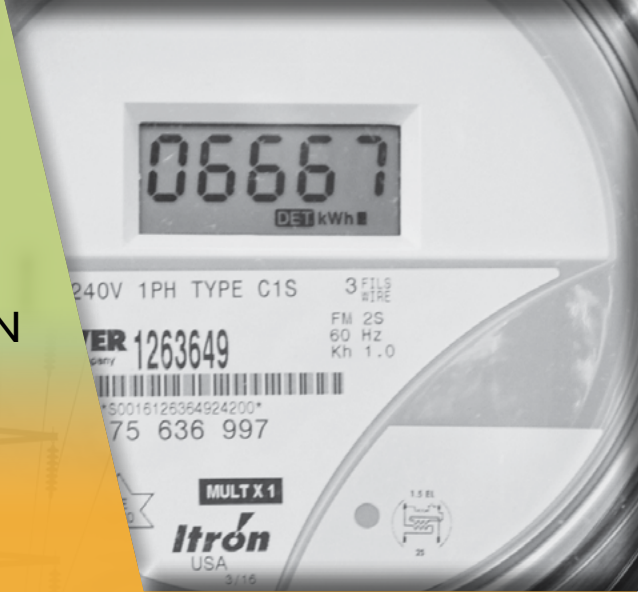
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INDUSTRIES  
COMMISSION** 

Protecting *YOUR* Interests

# QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS

## FOR THE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION SECTOR

### RAISING THE STANDARDS



The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC), in its capacity as the economic regulator for the Electricity Transmission and Distribution Sector, established the Quality of Service Standards (QSS) in 2004 to ensure that the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) provides and maintains an acceptable level of service to its customers. The RIC has monitored and reported on T&TEC's performance under the QSS Scheme and acknowledges the improvement in the quality of service provided by T&TEC. T&TEC continues to adhere to the standards while ensuring a safe and reliable supply of electricity to its customers and the wider public.

The QSS was first revised in 2009, and this is the second revision. It is important for customers to know and understand the performance standards that are set out in the current revision of the QSS, and that they will be entitled to compensation for breaches of some of the standards. The QSS continues to be based on two dimensions:

**1. Eight (8) GUARANTEED ELECTRICITY STANDARDS (GES)** – which set the service levels that must be met for each individual customer/s. Penalties are applied in the form of compensation to customers when T&TEC does not meet the standards.

**2. Six (6) OVERALL ELECTRICITY STANDARDS (OES)** – which set service levels that apply to ALL customers, however, it is not practical to provide an individual guarantee to customer/s.

## WHAT ARE THE GUARANTEED ELECTRICITY STANDARDS (GES)?

*The **Guaranteed Electricity Standards** cover areas of service for which T&TEC must meet specified performance levels for each and every customer.*

### RESPONSE & RESTORATION OF SUPPLY

#### GES 1

- T&TEC is required to restore supply after an unplanned outage on the distribution system within 10 hours.
- **COMPENSATION:** If T&TEC fails to achieve this standard, residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00 and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$600.00. For each further 12-hour period in which supply is not restored for a maximum of two additional periods, residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00 and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$600.00.

- Customers are required to file a claim with T&TEC for relevant compensation. When new systems are fully implemented, breaches of this standard will be automatically determined and customers will no longer be required to file a claim.

### BILLING PUNCTUALITY

#### GES 2

- Residential and non-residential customers must receive their first bill after a new connection within 60 days and 30 days, respectively.
- **COMPENSATION:** If T&TEC fails to achieve this standard,

both residential and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00.

**RECONNECTION AFTER THE PAYMENT OF OVER-DUE BILLS GES 3**

- Customers should have their supply reconnected within 24 hours after their overdue bills, along with the reconnection fee, are paid or an agreement on a payment schedule is reached with T&TEC.
- **COMPENSATION:** If T&TEC fails to achieve this standard, both residential and non-residential customers are to be refunded the reconnection fee which was paid.

**MAKING AND KEEPING APPOINTMENTS GES 4**

- Appointments with customers are to be confirmed. T&TEC is required to be no more than one hour late for the appointment and must give no less than 24 hours' notice of their inability to keep the appointment.
- **COMPENSATION:** If T&TEC fails to achieve this standard, both residential and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00.

**INVESTIGATION OF VOLTAGE COMPLAINTS GES 5**

Upon receiving a customer's complaint that the Single-Phase Voltage Supply is outside of the Statutory Range, T&TEC is required to:

1. evaluate the prevailing conditions, correct the issue, where a visit is not required, and notify the customer of the corrective action taken or else visit the customer's premises (where deemed necessary) within 24 hours of the complaint and
  2. Carry out corrective action (where necessary) and notify the customer accordingly within 15 working days of a voltage complaint.
- **COMPENSATION:** For each part of this standard that T&TEC fails to achieve, residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00 and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$600.00.

Upon receiving a customer's complaint that the variation between the phase voltages of a Three-Phase Voltage Supply is adversely affecting the customer, T&TEC is required to:

1. evaluate the prevailing conditions, correct the issue, where a visit is not required, and notify the customer of the corrective action taken or else visit the customer's premises (where deemed necessary) within 24 hours of the complaint and
2. Carry out corrective action (where necessary) within the time mutually agreed with the customer.

- **COMPENSATION:** For each part of this standard that T&TEC fails to achieve, residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00 and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$600.00.

**RESPONDING TO BILLING & PAYMENT QUERIES GES 6**

- T&TEC must provide a substantive (written) response to a customer's billing and payment queries within 15 working days.
- **COMPENSATION:** If T&TEC fails to achieve this standard, both residential and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00.

**EXECUTION OF CAPITAL WORKS & NEW CONNECTION OF SUPPLY GES 7**

- T&TEC must:
  1. complete preliminary surveys;
  2. provide cost estimates;
  3. complete construction works; and
  4. install customers' meters
 for each type of new service connection within the times specified in the table that follows, after the customer makes all the required payments and submits to T&TEC the appropriate documents required to complete the relevant transaction, including a valid Certificate of Inspection from the Government's Electrical Inspectorate Department.
- The final requirement of installing customers' meters (step 4) can also apply from a date mutually agreed upon between the service provider and the customer that is beyond the stipulated number of working days given for the types of connections A, B and C.



*The Quality Of Service standards ensure reliability and efficiency!*

**Table 1 – GES 7:**

The Required Performance Level and Penalty Payment that may be incurred depending on the type of New Service Connection

Type of Connection	Required Performance Level	Penalty Payment
<b>A. Within 30 metres.</b> <i>(Where no construction works on the part of the service provider are required.)</i>	Complete step 1 within 3 working days of request.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 4 within 3 working days of completing step 1.*	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
<b>B. Within 100 metres.</b> <i>(Where construction works on the part of the service provider are required.)</i>	Complete step 1 within 3 working days of request.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 2 within 5 working days of completing step 1 and submission of the required documents by the customer.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 3 within 15 working days of completing step 2 and the submission of any required payments and documents by the customer.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
<b>C. Greater than 100 metres.</b> <i>(Where construction works on the part of the service provider are required.)</i>	Complete step 4 within 3 working days of completing step 3 and the submission of any required payments and documents by the customer.*	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 1 within 3 working days of request.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 2 within 7 working days of completing step 1 and the submission of documents by the customer.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 3 within the time mutually agreed with the customer up to a maximum of 30 working days of completing step 2 and submission of any required payments and documents by the customer.	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
<b>D. Industrial.</b>	Complete step 4 within 3 working days of completing step 3 and submission of any required payments and documents by the customer.*	\$60 residential \$600 non-residential
	Complete step 1 within the time mutually agreed with the customer up to a maximum of 15 working days of request.	\$600
	Complete step 2 within 15 working days of completing step 1 and submission of the required documents by the customer.	\$600
	Complete step 3 within the time mutually agreed to with the customer after completing step 2 and submission of any required payments and documents by the customer.	\$600
	Complete step 4 within 5 working days of completing step 3 and submission of any required payments and documents by the customer.*	\$600

#### **PAYMENTS OWED UNDER GUARANTEED ELECTRICITY STANDARDS GES 8**

- Once the claim for a breach of any standard has been accepted by T&TEC, compensatory payment must be credited to the customer's bill within 30 working days for non-residential and 60 working days for residential customers.
- COMPENSATION:** If T&TEC fails to achieve this standard, both residential and non-residential customers are to be paid a compensation of \$60.00.

#### **What if T&TEC fails to meet any one of the guaranteed electricity standards?**

- Compensatory payments apply for breaches under all Guaranteed Electricity Standards. Compensatory payments are in the form of a credit on the customer's billing account based on the set amount and/or guidelines indicated for a breach of the applicable standard.
- EXCEPTIONS:** T&TEC is excluded from paying compensation for breaches of the Guaranteed Electricity Standards for events arising out of force majeure conditions (an extraordinary event or circumstance

beyond the control of the utility), such as but not limited to, interruptions caused by natural disasters and the failure of electricity generation supplied by a third party.

**How will compensation be applied?**

- Compensation payments are automatically processed and credited to customers' accounts for all guaranteed standards, except GES 1. Customers are required to complete and submit a claim form for GES 1 and for any of the GES (2 to 7) where customers have not seen

automatic processing in instances where customers are of the opinion that there was a breach of the applicable standard. Claim forms are available at any of T&TEC's Service Centres. Claims must be submitted within 3 months of the occurrence of the event otherwise they will not be considered.

**What happens after you file a claim?**

- Once T&TEC has investigated your complaint, and it is found to be valid, your billing account will be credited.

## WHAT ARE THE OVERALL ELECTRICITY STANDARDS (OES)?

*The Overall Electricity Standards cover areas of service for which it is inappropriate or not feasible for T&TEC to give individual guarantees, but T&TEC will be required to provide performance levels as specified by the RIC.*

**NETWORK RELIABILITY OES 1**

- T&TEC is required to maintain the yearly network reliability metrics for planned and unplanned outages on the distribution network (excluding force majeure events) of each of its Distribution Areas to within the set limits which will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis.

Initial targets are: SAIDI to within 400 minutes; and SAIFI to within 4.8 interruptions per customer.

**RESPONDING TO METER PROBLEMS OES 2**

- T&TEC must respond to customers' meter problems by visiting or providing a substantive response to the customer within ten (10) working days, at least 95% of the times.

**PRIOR NOTICE OF PLANNED INTERRUPTIONS OES 3**

- T&TEC is required to provide at least three (3) days (72 hours) advance notice of planned outages/interruption to customers 100% of the time with the expected date, time and duration of the interruption being clearly stated.

**STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE OES 4**

- T&TEC is required to repair 100% of non-functional street lights under its control, within 7 working days after receiving, except highway lighting.
- T&TEC is required to monitor highway lighting and repair 100% of non-functional lighting found within 14 working days.

**RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER'S COMPLAINTS/ REQUESTS WRITTEN OES 5**

- T&TEC is required to acknowledge receipt of written complaints/ requests within 5 working days.

- T&TEC is required to complete an investigation of the issue, resolve the matter and communicate its final position to the customer within 15 working days following receipt of the written complaints/ requests.
- In the event that a third party is involved, for example, an insurance claim, T&TEC is required to complete an investigation of the issue, resolve the matter and communicate its final position to the customer within 30 working days following receipt of the written complaints/ requests.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF CLAIM UNDER THE GUARANTEED ELECTRICITY STANDARDS OES 6**

- T&TEC must notify 100% of customers of receipt of claims submitted for compensatory payment within 5 working days.

**THE OVERALL ELECTRICITY STANDARDS DO NOT CARRY COMPENSATORY PAYMENTS.**

**What if T&TEC fails to meet any of the overall electricity standards?**

- While T&TEC is not penalized for failing to meet the requisite Overall Standards, it is required to report on its performance against such standards throughout the year. The RIC assesses and published these reports on T&TEC's performance to ensure that you the customer/s receive a high level of service with respect to the Overall Standards.

**What is the Customer's responsibility?**

- It is your responsibility to monitor the quality of the T&TEC's services against the limits set in the Quality of Service Standards and claim for any applicable breaches of the Standards.

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

# ‘WHO GUARDS THE LINES AT WASA?’ Newsday Editorial

## OFFICIAL RESPONSE

The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) has noted the Editorial, which appeared in the Newsday Newspaper on Monday 6th September, 2021, and which expressed concern about the RIC’s role in holding WASA to certain service standards. The RIC welcomes this opportunity to inform and educate the public on its independent role, the role of Quality Service of Standards for service providers, and the process by which they come into effect.

Quality of Service Standards establish the minimum level of service that a utility should provide to the public and consist of two types of standards – Guaranteed and Overall Standards. The Guaranteed Standards establish performance levels that the service provider, in this case WASA, must meet in serving individual customers. These standards attract compensatory payments if the service provider fails to meet the prescribed performance levels. The second type are Overall Standards which cover areas of service where it is not appropriate or feasible to give individual guarantees, but where the expectation is that the utility will provide pre-determined, minimum levels of service to a group of consumers. The Beetham problem, cited in the Editorial, falls under the Overall Standards which do not carry compensatory payment.

As required by the RIC Act, from which the RIC derives its authorities, the RIC held several consultations with members of the public and WASA in order to develop appropriate Quality of Service Standards (QSS) for the Supply and Distribution of Water and Wastewater Services in Trinidad and Tobago. Development of the standards require extensive consultations with all our stakeholders, including WASA and at times could be a protracted process. Thereafter, the standards are submitted to the Ministry of Public Utilities to make arrangements to have them published in Trinidad and Tobago Gazette, as publication is outside RIC’s scope under its Act.

The latest of these efforts has been submitted to MPU and it is the RIC’s understanding that the MPU is moving towards having these standards published in the near future. The RIC awaits the publication in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette, after which the public will be notified of the effective date of implementation, and the service provider held to improving its service levels to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

*Wednesday 8th September, 2021*

# TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME

Working from home has become the new normal for most persons. It has transformed the way we interact and perform our duties. This change has impacted certain aspects of our work and home life.

**HERE ARE 10 TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**



**A. DAILY ROUTINES**

1. As soon as you wake up, make your bed, and brush your teeth. Then change into your workout or business casual clothes vs. staying in your PJs.
2. Allocate a specific workspace just for work, so you don't end up working in bed. Also, make sure you can close the door for privacy on calls.
3. Ensure that you can turn work off at the end of the day. Working from home doesn't have to mean being 'on-call' 24/7.

**B. PRODUCTIVITY AND TOOLS/ TECHNOLOGY**

4. Create efficiencies in communication using tools such as Zoom, Teams, and Email. Social

distancing does not mean that you are alone. Your team is just a few clicks away on chat or video.

5. Avoid distractions by installing site blockers that limit your time spent on social media or other websites that are a distraction for you.
6. Start your day with a prioritized task list that you can check off as the day goes on.

**C. HEALTH**

7. Download an at-home workout app to keep up with your Exercise Routine. There are a ton of gyms and apps that are offering free classes for members and non-members.
8. Don't snack on the bad stuff. Drink lots of water, eat fruits and have a dedicated "snacktime"