



REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

RICNEWS

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**REGULATED
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Protecting YOUR Interests

Quarterly Complaints Report

Consumer Complaints Get Resolved 

RIC's Complaints Report for 1st Quarter 2013

Status	Jan '13	Feb '13	Mar '13	Total
Number of complaints received	168	221	282	671
Number of complaints resolved	95	108	175	378
Number of complaints unresolved	73	113	107	293
Number of complaints withdrawn	0	0	0	0
Resolution rate for complaints received	57%	49%	62%	56%
No. of outstanding complaints resolved	182	65	106	353
Total number of complaints resolved	277	173	281	731

REBATE/COMPENSATION AWARDED TO CUSTOMERS BETWEEN JAN- MAR 2013

\$199, 224.00

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 Services 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

Schedule of Outreach Programme for the Customer Services Department

Week	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1 or 2		OP Siparia Regional Corporation	OP Chaguanas Borough Corporation	OP San Fernando City Corporation	OP Penal/Debe Regional Corporation	OP Princes Town Regional Corporation	OP Arima Borough Corporation	OP Myaro/Rio Regional Corporation	OP Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation	OP Sangre Grande Regional Corporation	OP Point Fortin Borough Corporation	
3*		OP Tobago		OP Tobago		OP Tobago		OP Tobago		OP Tobago		

* COP scheduled for 3rd Thursday bi-monthly at OMB Tobago Office.

Port of Spain City Corporation, Diego Martin Regional Corporation, San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation & Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation not included in the CSD's Outreach Programme due to accessibility to the RIC's office.

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NATIONWIDE POWER OUTAGE

RIC's Quality of Service Standards for the Electricity Transmission and Distribution Sector

On March 29th, 2013 Trinidad and Tobago experienced a nationwide power outage that lasted up to 12 hours in some areas.

The Ministry of Energy, on investigation of the matter stated that, at 12:25 am on March 29 2013, the Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited (PPGPL) plant at the Point Lisas Industrial Estate tripped as a result of a malfunction of their emergency shutdown system. This caused a loss of the natural gas supply to four generation plants which consequently resulted in blackouts across the country.

The issue of compensation for the loss of electricity soon arose following the incident and concerned citizens turned to the RIC for clarification on the governing policy for such a situation.

The RIC's "Quality of Service Standards for the Electricity Transmission and Distribution Sector" policy document specifically outlines a guaranteed service standard that outlines the permissible duration for prolonged outages to customers and the

compensation customers are entitled to if this service standard is breached by the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC). The first edition of these standards was gazetted in April, 2004 and formed the basis then and thereafter (with periodic revisions) for establishing the level of service quality that T&TEC would have to provide to its customers and which shall be monitored by the Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) for compliance.

BRIEF ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS

One of the principal objectives of the RIC is to protect the interests of the consumers of the Service Providers that fall under its jurisdiction. One of the means of achieving this objective is by ensuring that Service Providers meet specified levels of service quality. These prescribed levels have been set in the **Quality of Service Standards (QSS)**. Sections 6 (1) (e), (f) and (g) of the RIC Act, Chapter 54:73 empowers the RIC to prescribe standards for services, monitor service providers'

compliance with the standards and to impose sanctions for non-compliance.

One such Service Provider under the jurisdiction of the RIC is T&TEC, which is the nation's sole transmission and distribution utility. The RIC has gazetted since April, 2004, QSS for T&TEC in the form of Guaranteed Electricity Standards and Overall Electricity Standards.

These QSS are subject to periodic review every three years and the performance requirements are typically revised in order to ensure that T&TEC's level of performance continues to improve. The next review is scheduled to take place in 2013.

Guaranteed Electricity Standards (GES) – a service guarantee to each and every customer

The Guaranteed Electricity Standards set service levels that must be met in each individual case. These standards also carry compensatory payments to the affected customers if the utility fails to provide the level of service required.

(continued on page 4)

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NATIONWIDE POWER OUTAGE

(from page 3)

These standards generally relate to the relationship between the utility and the individual customer.

Overall Electricity Standards (OES) – establishing high levels of service for all customers

The Overall Electricity Standards 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 levels of service. These standards generally relate to the reliability of service affecting a group of customers.

However, it has been stipulated that the Guaranteed Standards Programme should be suspended in circumstances where compliance is beyond the control of T&TEC. Examples of such exceptional circumstances or 'Force Majeure Conditions' may include:

- Breakdown or collapse of the generation system in Trinidad and Tobago;
- Malicious and/or accidental damage by third parties which could not have been prevented or foreseen by T & TEC; and

- Natural disasters and/or exceptional weather.

Under the force majeure conditions, it will be the responsibility of the Service Provider to inform the RIC of the suspension. On receiving the clearance of the RIC that a force majeure condition exists/existed, the Service Provider will advise customers. However, under force majeure conditions, the Service Provider must take all necessary steps to restore normal service as quickly as possible.

There are (8) Guaranteed Electricity Standards enforced at this point in time and there are different values of compensation that are applicable with respect to which standard has been breached by T&TEC and the class of customer whether residential or non-residential (commercial and industrial).

The description of each Guaranteed Electricity Standard, the performance levels that must be met and the value of compensation for a breach is presented on page 6. ■

...PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...

Wednesday 17th April, 2013

RIC DENIES T&TEC'S **from Compensatory** **for the March 29th**

The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) has denied the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission's (T&TEC) application for exemption from compensatory payments, under the Guaranteed Electricity Standards (GES1), to Tobago customers who may have experienced a loss of electricity supply for duration greater than 10 hours as a result of the Friday 29th March, 2013 power outage.

In a letter addressed to T&TEC's General Manager on April 16th, 2013, the RIC stated that it has determined that **no exemption** will be granted to T&TEC for any customer making a valid claim of loss of electricity supply for more than 10 hours in **Tobago**.

This decision was made as the RIC is convinced that adequate generation capacity was available at T&TEC's Cove Power Station to ensure an expedient restoration of the electricity supply to customers who were initially affected by the loss of supply via the submarine cable from Trinidad.

The RIC has also **deferred** granting to T&TEC an exemption from penalty payments with respect to the customers in **Trinidad** until the RIC has received and reviewed T&TEC's final report on the outage. The final report is due to be submitted to the RIC by April 29th, 2013.

RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...

S APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION

y Payments to Tobago customers n Power Outage



In another letter addressed to the T&TEC General Manager yesterday, the RIC advised that it has identified a number of issues that require further clarification and/or explanation and which must be included in T&TEC's final report submission. Further, the final report must also include T&TEC's proposals to address the identified issues.

THESE ISSUES INCLUDE:

- *What recourse if any does T&TEC, as the purchaser of the natural gas supplied to the Power Plants, have from the National Gas Company (NGC) for the incident which occurred?*
- *What options are being considered by all concerned parties with regard to minimizing the risk of a reoccurrence of such a substantial loss of the natural gas supply?*
- *Is there a formal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in the event of a partial/full loss of generation in Trinidad? Further, is the design of T&TEC's network in Trinidad structured to automatically respond to the loss of supply from the different generation plants in order to maintain proper loading of the generation plants that remain online?*
- *How will the various issues that contributed to the length of time it took before generation supply was fully restored to T&TEC for transmission and distribution to customers be addressed? For example, slow or no Black Start response by some of the generation plants.*
- *Why were multiple attempts required before the initial available supply of generation was reliably interfaced onto T&TEC's network?*
- *Is there a formal SOP in place at the Cove Power Station to maintain the electricity supply to customers in the event of the loss of generation supply via the submarine cable from Trinidad?*
- *Were instituted procedures not followed which contributed to the failure to restore the electricity supply to all of the customers in Tobago from the Cove Power Plant and the subsequent outage on the entire island? And what were these procedures?*

In an effort to ensure that all matters with respect to the nationwide power outage are effectively and diligently addressed, the RIC yesterday also wrote to the management of the Power Generation Company of

Trinidad and Tobago (PowerGen) and Trinity Power Limited.

Trinity Power Limited has yet to submit any reports or documentation on the incident.

The Trinity Power Limited letter stated that in accordance with RIC's Event Notification and Response Management Plan (ENRMP), Trinity Power Limited is reminded that it was required to provide an interim report by April 3rd, 2013 to the RIC on the shutdown of its equipment that occurred on March 29th 2013.

The RIC also requested that PowerGen report to the RIC on progress made with respect to the implementation of the recommendations contained in its report, which was submitted on April 2nd, 2013. Specifically with reference to the development and execution of a collaborative emergency plan between T&TEC, NGC and PowerGen to cater for the unexpected and immediate loss of natural gas pressure, the work undertaken to improve the Black Start capability at the Port-of-Spain, Point Lisas and Penal Power Plants and the procedures that are to be instituted with regards to the maintenance of the associated machinery and response drills. ■

GUARANTEED ELECTRICAL STANDARDS

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	PERFORMANCE LEVEL	PENALTY PAYMENTS
GES1	Restoration of supply after an 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

In the event of non-compliance of Guaranteed Electricity Standards, there are basically two (2) methods of payment:

- For GES1, a customer is required to make a claim within a three month period to T&TEC and this claim is then investigated and verified by T&TEC. If in fact a breach of the standard by T&TEC has been established, a payment by T&TEC would then be made to the customer's account; and
- For GES2 to GES8, an automatic payment by T&TEC would be made to the customer's account once T&TEC has breached these standards.

In the event that customers are dissatisfied with the results of complaints that they have already taken to T&TEC, they can seek mediation of the issue with the RIC.



REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

Customer
Service
Toll Free Number:
800-4RIC (4742)

DAMAGED APPLIANCE/ EQUIPMENT CLAIM PROCESS

ANY CUSTOMER WHOSE ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION, OR APPLIANCE OR EQUIPMENT, WAS DAMAGED RESULTING FROM VOLTAGE FLUCTUATIONS OR INTERRUPTION IN SUPPLY ON T&TEC'S DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, **CAN FILE A CLAIM.**

1 VERIFICATION OF CLAIM

The customer should provide T&TEC with the following information, as requested in claim form, in order to verify the claim:

- the service address affected by the electrical incident;
- the time and date of the electrical incident;
- the item/s (property/ appliance/ equipment) damaged;
- the amount of compensation claimed. This amount should be on the basis that customer is no worse off, that is, the cost of replacing of substantially the same age, functionality and appearance; or the cost of repairing to substantially the same functionality and appearance.

2 INVESTIGATION AND DETERMINATION OF LIABILITY

T&TEC must initiate its investigation by the second day of the complaint and send/ make available to the customer a claim form. T&TEC is required to provide a response within ten (10) working days of the complaint.

If T&TEC is unable to confirm the incident, either together with or subsequent to sending the claim form, T&TEC may request that the customer provide a statement by a qualified person that the damage is consistent with a voltage variation.

Further, T&TEC must communicate its final position within 30 working days of the complaint.

3 PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION

If after investigations T&TEC agrees with the claim, T&TEC must pay the customer the amount claimed within 15 days of the acceptance of claim.

4 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Customers can refer the matter to the RIC if they are dissatisfied with T&TEC's decision or T&TEC has failed to communicate its final decision. The RIC would conduct an independent assessment to determine if T&TEC's decision was justified. However, the customer can take other steps to arrive at a resolution, which may include mediation, arbitration and recourse through the Courts.



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RIC CARNIVAL LIME

The RIC hosted its Annual Carnival Lime on Friday 1st February, 2013 at the Capital Plaza, Poolside from 4:00pm to 8:00pm. Staff and invited guests were treated to an exhilarating evening with entertainment from Soca artiste Destra Garcia, sweet pan music from Tripolians Steel Orchestra, food, drinks and performances by the RIC's very own Rising Soca Stars!



1st Place

Mr. Martin Haynes (Martin and the Bouncing Girls) won 1st place in the RIC's Soca competition



2nd Place

Mr. Danny Ramsepaul (Super Bellies) took 2nd place



3rd Place

Mr. Connel Mottley (Connel Iwer Mottley) received 3rd place



Outstanding!!

Tripolians Steel Orchestra gave an outstanding performance



Energy!!

Ms. Destra Garcia kept the crowd fully entertained and full of energy!

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