

**THE QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS  
FOR THE  
SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF WATER  
AND FOR WASTEWATER SERVICES**

**DRAFT PROPOSALS**

**A SUMMARY**

**Classification: Information Document  
Distribution: Public/Stakeholders  
Reference No.: TO/003/2004  
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## **Introduction**

In March 2003, the RIC published the *Quality of Service Standards for the Supply and Distribution of Water and for Wastewater Services – Draft for Consultation*. That document set out proposals on detailed aspects of the guaranteed and overall standards of performance. In response to that document, the RIC received written responses from thirteen (13) individuals and organizations. The RIC, as part of its consultation process, also visited nineteen (19) communities in Trinidad and Tobago. Respondents' views have been considered and further clarifications/discussions incorporated where necessary.

This summary paper took the views and comments expressed by respondents and sets out the RIC's draft conclusions on the guaranteed and overall standards for the supply and distribution of water and wastewater services. The RIC's final position will be made public after the completion of the consultation on this draft proposal. The general features of the scheme are outlined below. **Table 1** summarizes the guaranteed standards while the overall standards are presented in **Table 2**. This is followed by a detailed description of the standards.

## **General Issues**

The standards are expected to be introduced by January 1, 2005 at which time monitoring will commence. WASA will be required to report to the RIC on the standards from March 1 2005. The standards will be in force for a period of three years and then reviewed. Standards GWS1 and GWS2 will not attract compensation until January 1 2006 while Standard OWS2 will not become effective until January 1 2007.

Communication to the public on the standards will be undertaken by both the RIC and WASA. Details of the standards will be circulated to consumers through brochures enclosed in their bills. Additionally, information will be available at the RIC office and offices of WASA.

### **Level of Compensation**

The proposed level of compensation available to customers for the guaranteed standards is:

- 15% of quarterly bill for domestic customers (Class A);
- 15% of monthly bill for commercial, cottage and agricultural customers (Classes C, D and E); and
- 3% of monthly bill for industrial customers (Class B).

Repeated breach of any guaranteed standard will incur further compensation as follows:

- 5% for domestic customers;
- 5% for commercial, cottage and agricultural customers; and
- 1 % for industrial customers.

This will apply for every further period the standard is not met up to a maximum of three periods.

### **Making Claims and Payments**

Customers will be required to make a claim for compensation once they feel that a standard has been breached. Claim forms will be available at regional centres and customer service offices of WASA. Claims will be investigated and once found to be valid, payments are projected to be made within 90 days of the date the claim was received. Claims must be submitted within three months of the standard being breached.

Payments for breach of guaranteed standards will be credited to customers' accounts. The amount to be compensated will be clearly shown and appropriately labelled.

### **Monitoring Performance**

WASA will be required to provide quarterly (with monthly breakout) quality of service standard reports on its performance with respect to each standard. The RIC will inform consumers of WASA's performance against the standards by publishing relevant information on an annual/semiannual basis.

Since the overall standards do not attract compensatory payments, WASA's performance against the overall standards would be one of the main issues for consideration at tariff reviews.

### **Force Majeure conditions and exemptions from standards**

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme will be suspended in circumstances where compliance is beyond the control of WASA. The RIC must be promptly notified by WASA in all cases of suspension or proposed suspension of the scheme indicating the exact duration of such suspension. The burden of proof of exceptional circumstance will lie with WASA. Examples of possible exceptional events are:

- Severe bad weather or natural disasters;
- System conditions such as major breakdown of treatment plants or pumping stations;
- Drought;
- Civil unrest;
- Strikes; and
- Malicious destruction of property.

On confirmation of the occurrence of a *force majeure* condition, WASA will use appropriate means to advise customers. However, it must make all necessary efforts to restore a normal service to its customers as quickly as possible.

**Comments, queries or clarifications regarding this document may be submitted to:**

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**Regulated Industries Commission**

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**Copies of this document are available from the RIC Information Centre and on the RIC web site [www.ric.org.tt](http://www.ric.org.tt)**

## Supply and Distribution of Water and for Wastewater Services

**Table 1 - Guaranteed Standards**

Code	Service Description	Performance Measure	Required Units	Further Period for Compensation	Comments
<b>GWS1</b>	Implementation of schedules	Specified period to provide water supply  <b>Schedules of not less than twice a week for a minimum of 12 hours</b>	As per scheduled times	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>All areas in Trinidad and Tobago will be entitled to receive a supply at least twice a week</b></li> <li>Compensation to be applied 12 months after gazetting of standards</li> <li>Schedules can be adjusted in dry season subject to approval by the RIC</li> <li>GWS1 not applicable if lack of supply due to interruptions (GWS3)</li> </ul>
<b>GWS2</b>	Truck borne Supply	Truck borne supply if no mains supply available	<p><b><u>Unplanned Interruptions</u></b></p> <p><b>1. To be provided 24 hours after the start of the disruption and within a 24 hour period if pipe borne supply not yet available</b></p> <p><b><u>Planned Interruptions</u></b></p> <p><b>2. To be provided within 4 hours after the agreed time for interruption has ended and pipe borne supply not yet available</b></p> <p><b><u>Schedules</u></b></p> <p><b>3. Be provided within 12 hours after 2 agreed periods have been missed and pipe borne supply not yet available</b></p>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation to be applied 12 months after gazetting of standards</li> </ul>

Code	Service Description	Performance Measure	Required Units	Further Period for Compensation	Comments
GWS3	Restoration of Supply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned</li> <li>Unplanned</li> </ul>	Maximum time to restore supply	<b>Planned:</b> As per published times up to a maximum of 72 hours <b>Unplanned:</b> <b>18 hrs general</b> 72 hrs for strategic mains	12 hours	
GWS4	Repair to Water Service Connections (WSC)	Maximum time to repair WSC	From 24 hrs to 72 hours (see below for details)*	See below for details*	
GWS5	Installation of new WSCs	1. Survey of customer's property 2. Installation of WSC	1. <b>Within 5 working days of application</b> 2. <b>Within 7 working days of payment</b>	24 hours	
GWS6	Reconnections	Maximum time to reconnect supply	<b>24 hrs</b>	24 hours	
GWS7	Response to billing queries	1. Reply to billing queries 2. Solution to billing queries	1. Within 5 working days 2. <b>Within 40 working days</b>	24 hours	
GWS8	Response to written complaints	1. Reply to complaints 2. Solution to complaints	1. Within 5 working days 2. Within 30 working days	24 hours	
GWS9	Compensatory Payments	1. <b>Guaranteed Standard: Time to credit compensatory payment after non-compliance</b>  2. <b>Claim for damages: Time to complete investigation, determine liability and make payment after receiving a claim</b>	90 days  <b>35 working days</b>	7 days  7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claim to be made by customer and credited to account</li> <li>Similar to period for standards for the electricity sector</li> <li>Claim to be paid by cheque</li> </ul>
GWS10	Poor Quality Drinking Water	Incident as defined and established by the RIC as having provided poor quality drinking water	Compensation to customer	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New standard introduced Overall standards OWS4 still in effect</b></li> </ul>

**\*GWS4 - Leak Type, Classification and Repair Periods**

Nature of Leak	Classification	Time Frame	Further Period for Compensation
WSC leaking and resulting in damage to property <b>or affecting critical institutions</b>	Urgent	Within 24 hours	12 hrs
Leak affecting supply to customer	Important	Within 72 hours	24 hrs

**Table 2 - Overall Standards**

Code	Service Description	Performance Measure	Required Units	Comments
<b>OWS1</b>	Communication in regard to Supply Interruptions	Minimum time to communicate before interruption	48 hours	
<b>OWS2</b>	Water Pressure	Minimum and maximum Head	Minimum 14m Head Maximum 70m Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be implemented at the end of the second year of the review period</li> </ul>
<b>OWS3</b>	Metering	1. Timely reading of meters  2. Maximum time to repair meters	1. Every 6 months for domestic customers and every 3 months for non-domestic customers  2. Within 30 days	
<b>OWS4</b>	Improvement to drinking water quality & sewage effluent quality	WHO/T&T standards	As per standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GWS10 standard created (supply of poor quality drinking water)</b></li> <li><b>95% compliance with WHO standards for physical/chemical parameters</b></li> </ul>
<b>OWS5</b>	Repair to sewers	Maximum time to repair sewers	<b>Minor Repairs - 24 hrs</b> <b>Major Repairs – 72 hrs</b>	
<b>OWS6</b>	Road restoration	Code of Practice (CP)	24 hrs temporary, 7 days permanent road restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be developed by WASA in conjunction with relevant bodies</li> </ul>
<b>OWS7</b>	Leakage	Code of Practice (CP)	As per CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be developed by WASA in conjunction with relevant bodies</li> </ul>
<b>OWS8</b>	Disconnections	Code of Practice (CP)	As per CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be developed by WASA in conjunction with relevant bodies</li> </ul>
<b>OWS9</b>	Mains Laying	Code of Practice (CP)	As per CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be developed by WASA in conjunction with relevant bodies</li> </ul>





## **GWS1 Implementation of Schedules**

### **Requirement**

The service provider shall publish schedules of water service so that the public is advised of the times when water will be supplied to them. If the service provider fails to supply an adequate supply of water to the customer during the prescribed schedule period and it is not due to a supply interruption, the customer shall be entitled to compensation for each and every time water is not supplied during the prescribed schedule period.

The service provider shall provide a supply to customers, via its schedules. This supply shall not be for not less than twice a week and a minimum of 12 hours of continuous supply each period. The expected time periods for supply are to be provided in the schedules.

## **GWS2 Supply of Truck Borne Water**

### **Rationale**

In the event that mains supply is interrupted for extended periods (more than 72 hours) for any reason, the service provider should ensure a truck borne supply is provided to the customer. Reasons for lack of supply through mains could include planned or unplanned interruptions or lack of service via the water schedule.

### **Requirement**

The service provider shall supply a truck borne water supply in the following circumstances:

#### **Unplanned Interruptions**

- A truck borne water supply be provided 24 hours **after** the start of the disruption and within a 24-hour period if pipe borne supply not yet available.

#### **Planned Interruptions**

- A truck borne water supply be provided within 4 hours **after** the agreed time for interruption has ended and pipe borne supply not yet available.

## **Schedules**

- A truck borne water supply be provided within 12 hours **after** 2 agreed periods have been missed and pipe borne supply not yet available.

## **GWS3 Restoration of Supply**

### **Requirement**

#### ***Planned interruptions***

In the event of a planned interruption to the water supply the provider shall inform customers via the print and/or electronic media when the supply will be restored and shall keep to that time. The maximum duration of the interruption shall not exceed 72 hours.

#### ***Unplanned interruptions***

If there is an unplanned interruption to the supply, due to a burst main for example, the service provider shall restore the supply within 18 hours unless the burst or leak is on a "strategic main" in which case the company has up to 72 hours. A "strategic main" is a transmission water main or major water distribution main (between 6" and 54" in diameter), which supplies a broad area.

In addition to these guaranteed standards, the service provider shall also, as soon as possible, take all reasonable steps to inform customers of:

- The availability of an alternative supply;
- The location of an alternative supply such as communal tanks;
- The time it proposes to restore the supply; and
- A telephone number where the customer can obtain more information.

**GWS4 Repair to Water Service Connections (WSCs) affecting customers**

**Requirement**

The service provider shall repair leaking pipes according to the time frame given. The time frame is based on the nature and classification of the leak as outlined in **Table 1**.

**GWS5 Installation of new Water Service Connections (WSC)**

**Requirement**

1. The service provider shall survey the prospective customer's property and provide results of the survey within 5 working days of receipt of an application for the connection.
2. The service provider shall provide a WSC to the prospective customer within 7 working days of his paying for the connection provided that the customer has completed all necessary steps to receive the connection.

**GWS6 Reconnections (Return of service)**

**Requirement**

The service provider shall reconnect, within 24 hours, customers whose supply has been locked off for non-payment of rates once they have satisfactorily settled their accounts or have made the necessary arrangements for settlement.

**GWS7 Response Time to Billing Queries**

**Requirement**

If a customer writes or telephones the service provider querying the correctness of his/her account, the service provider shall reply within 5 working days from the date of receipt of the letter or call.

The service provider shall complete an investigation and communicate the final position to the customer within 40 working days from the date of receipt of the letter or call.

## **GWS8      Response Time to Written Complaints**

### **Requirement**

If a customer complains in writing about water or sewerage services, the service provider shall reply within 5 working days from the date of receipt of the letter.

The service provider shall complete investigation and communicate the final position to the customer within 30 working days from the date of receipt of the letter.

## **GWS9      Compensatory Payments**

### **Requirement**

The service provider shall credit to customer accounts amounts that are due under the guaranteed standards scheme within 90 days of the date of the claim.

Additional compensation will become due if the compensation for the breached standard is not made within the specified period. This will also apply for further periods until payment is made.

Similarly the service provider, in cases of damage to a customer's property, shall complete investigation, determine liability and make payments that are due, in the form of a cheque and within 35 working days of the claim being received.

Additional compensation will become due if the compensation for the claim is not made within the specified period. This will also apply for further periods until payment is made.

## **GWS10      Poor Quality Drinking Water**

### **Requirement**

If an incident has been established, investigated and determined as to the cause of poor quality water being delivered to customers, such customers shall be entitled to compensation where the service provider is culpable. The RIC shall

be responsible for the establishment, investigation by an independent investigator if necessary, and determination of the incident. Compensation will be provided as defined under Section 3.4.2.3 of the draft Quality of Service Standards document.

### **OWS1          Communication in regard to Supply Interruptions**

#### **Requirement**

If the service provider plans to interrupt the water supply for more than 4 hours, it shall inform the customer via the print and/or electronic media at least 48 hours before it shuts off the supply.

### **OWS2          Water Pressure**

#### **Requirement**

The service provider shall supply a minimum water pressure of 14m head in the water main adjacent to the customer's property. This is usually sufficient to serve three-storeyed properties in the supply area. A maximum of 70m head is not to be exceeded.

### **OWS3          Metering**

#### **Requirement**

1. The service provider has the responsibility to provide one measured (not estimated) bill every six months to domestic customers and one measured bill every three months to non-domestic customers.
2. The service provider shall repair or replace a faulty water meter within 30 days of being informed by the customer.

### **OWS4          Improvement to drinking water and sewage effluent quality**

#### **Requirement**

The service provider shall collect and analyse water and sewage samples. Water and wastewater samples are to have 95% compliance with World Health Organization (WHO) standards and with local drinking water and wastewater

standards for physical and chemical parameters and 100% compliance for bacteriological thresholds.

#### **OWS5      Repair to Sewers**

##### **Requirement**

For the sewerage network owned and/or operated by the service provider, broken or choked sewers affecting customers shall be repaired within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint for minor repairs. For major repairs the time will be extended to 96 hours.

Where wastewater from a sewer enters a customer's property, customers may be entitled to receive a refund of their costs incurred in the cleanup of the flooding incident if this has not been undertaken by the service provider.

Claims shall be made in writing to the service provider within three months of incident.

#### **OWS6      Road Restoration**

##### **Requirement**

Where leaks have been repaired, the service provider shall restore the roadway within 24 hours, on a temporary basis, and within 7 days on a permanent basis to the condition it was before the repair was undertaken. The service provider under this standard shall develop a code of practice outlining:

- Backfill of roadway;
- Requirements for temporary road reinstatement;
- Requirements for permanent road reinstatement; and
- Any other relevant matters.

This Code of Practice shall have input from the relevant technical and supervisory bodies such as the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Ministry

of Local Government. It shall be the basis for the execution of this standard and must meet with the approval of the RIC.

### **OWS7      Leakage**

#### **Requirement**

The service provider under this standard shall develop a code of practice outlining:

- Elements and sub elements for unaccounted for water (UFW) reduction and control. The major elements to be considered are:
  - The identification of target areas;
  - Measurement;
  - Leak detection/location;
  - Pressure management;
  - Mains repair; and
  - Modelling.
- Practices/procedures for the reduction and control of unaccounted for water (UFW).
- Targets and measures for UFW reduction and control.
- Facilitation and coordination of the implementation of UFW processes.

The Code shall be the basis for the execution of this standard and must meet with the approval of the RIC.

### **OWS8      Disconnections**

#### **Requirement**

The service provider under this standard shall develop a code of practice outlining:

- Reasons for disconnection other than non-payments of rates;
- Notice of disconnection;
- Timing and scheduling of disconnection;
- Payments for disconnections; and
- Any other relevant matters.



The Code shall be the basis for the execution of this standard and must meet with the approval of the RIC.

### **OWS9 Mains Laying**

#### **Requirement**

Under this standard, the service provider shall develop a code of practice outlining:

- Notice for mains laying or mains repair exercises;
- Protection and safety of road works;
- Control of traffic;
- Maintenance of the roadway during construction;
- Response to damages resulting from incident during road works; and
- Any other relevant matters.

The Code shall be the basis for the execution of this standard and must meet with the approval of the RIC.