REGULATED INDUSTRIES COMMISSION

Quality of Service Standards (QSS) for Water and Wastewater Services

November 2026

Final Decision

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1. Background

The Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) is the economic regulator for the electricity, water and wastewater sectors in Trinidad and Tobago. In the conduct of its regulatory functions, the RIC is guided by the legislative and regulatory framework set out in the RIC Act, Chapter 54:73. Section 6(1) of the RIC Act empowers the RIC to prescribe standards of service, to monitor service providers to assess performance with the established standards, and to impose sanctions for noncompliance. Section 6(2) of the Act requires the Commission to consult with service providers and any other parties it considers to have an interest in the matters before it.

The RIC published the draft Quality of Service Standards (QSS) for Water and Wastewater Services in August 2017 and conducted extensive consultation with the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), the public and other stakeholders in the finalisation of the QSS. The Final Decision was published in December 2017. The standards were submitted to the Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU) in December 2017 for publication in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette. The RIC engaged in further consultation with WASA from June 2019 to October 2019 to address concerns raised by the service provider about its ability to comply with the standards. The exercise involved extensive discussions with WASA to facilitate implementation and compliance with the standards. The RIC published its revised Final Decision in December 2020 and submitted the standards to the MPU for publication in the Gazette. WASA again raised further concerns about its ability to implement specific standards. The RIC engaged in further consultation with WASA during the period February to October 2023 to discuss the particular concerns raised. This is the second revision of the RIC's Final Decision on the Quality of Service Standards for Water and Wastewater Services in Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Purpose of this Document

In this document, the RIC presents its final decision on the quality of service standards for the water and wastewater sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

3. Structure of the Document

This document is divided into seven sections, as follows:

- Section 1 provides a brief background;
- Section 2 outlines the purpose of the document;
- Section 3 specifies the structure of the document;
- Section 4 indicates the changes to the proposed standards;
- Section 5 identifies the standards for which a moratorium is granted;
- Section 6 presents the RIC's Final Decision on the Guaranteed Standards; and
- Section 7 presents the RIC's Final Decision on the Overall Standards.

4. Changes to the Proposed Standards

The quality of service standards scheme proposed by the RIC for the water and wastewater sector in Trinidad and Tobago is a guaranteed payments scheme. The scheme comprises nine (9) Guaranteed Standards and nine (9) Overall Standards. The Guaranteed Standards specify 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 deliver the level of service required. They generally relate to the relationship between the utility and individual customers. The Overall 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 a predetermined, minimum level of service. These standards generally relate to the quality of service affecting a group of customers.

In considering changes to the proposed standards, the RIC was mindful that the service provider ought to provide a reasonable minimum level of service to customers. At the same time, the quality of service standards should incentivise the service provider to improve its service to customers, taking into account its current capability to meet the standards and to improve over time. WASA did not object to the concept and implementation of the proposed quality of service standards scheme. However, the utility indicated that it needed time and resources to bring its performance up to the level prescribed by the standards. After the consultation, the concepts, principles and areas of coverage of the standards remained unchanged. No new standard was added, nor was any withdrawn from the eighteen (18) standards that were initially proposed. However, the RIC made changes to five (5) of the standards to facilitate implementation and compliance by WASA, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 – Standards that were modified after Further Consultation with WASA

Standard	Proposed Standard (December 2020 Final Decision)	Changes after Further Consultation (December 2023 Final Decision)	Rationale for the Changes
GWS 3- Provision of Truck-borne supply if mains supply is interrupted	<u>For Planned interruptions:</u> WASA is required to provide a maximum of 400 gallons per class A customers' requests, and a maximum of 1200 gallons per classes B, C, D and E customers' requests, within 48 hours after the notified time for interruption has ended if pipe-borne supply is not yet available. <u>For Unplanned interruptions:</u> WASA is required to provide a maximum of 400 gallons per class A customers' requests, and a maximum of 1200 gallons per classes B, C, D and E customers' requests, from 48 hours after the start of the disruption and within the next 48 hours if pipe-borne supply is not yet available.	WASA is required to provide a maximum of 600 gallons per class A customers' requests for both planned and unplanned interruptions.	To increase the maximum amount of water that WASA may provide by a truck-borne supply to class A customers.
GWS 4- Time to repair to Water Service Connections (WSC)	WASA is required to repair a Water Service Connection (WSC): 1. Within 48 hrs (2 working days) of report by customer – for loss of supply to registered critical institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals) and for leaks resulting in damage to property. 2. Within 5 working days – for leaks & loss of supply affecting supply to customer.	WASA is required to repair a Water Service Connection (WSC): 1. Within 3 days of report by customer – for loss of supply to registered critical institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals) and for leaks resulting in damage to property. 2. Within 7 days – for leaks & loss of supply affecting supply to customer.	To ensure that Water Service Connections are repaired within a reasonable time while allowing WASA more time to carry out the repair.
GWS 6- Reconnection of supply after settling outstanding accounts or disconnection due to error	WASA is required to reconnect the water supply to a customer: • Within 1 working day of receipt of full payment and reconnection fee, or as per agreement with WASA for installations with a curb valve or in determining that the customer was disconnected in error. • Within 2 working days for all other installations.	WASA is required to reconnect the water supply to a customer: • Within 1 working day of receipt of full payment and reconnection fee, or as per agreement with WASA for installations with a curb valve or when it has been determined by WASA that an error was made. • Within 3 working days for installations with no curb valve.	To ensure that reconnections to customers without a curb valve are carried out in a reasonable time while allowing WASA more time to complete the reconnection.

Standard	Proposed Standard (December 2020 Final Decision)	Changes after Further Consultation (December 2023 Final Decision)	Rationale for the Changes
OWS 2- Water Pressure	The water pressure provided by WASA at the Water Service Connection (WSC) point to customers (who are not on a schedule) must be: Minimum 14m head of pressure (20 psi). Maximum 70m head of pressure (100 psi).	The water pressure provided by WASA at the Water Service Connection (WSC) point to customers (who are not on a schedule) must be: Minimum 10m head of pressure (15 psi). Maximum 70m head of pressure (100 psi).	To maintain an acceptable minimum water supply pressure while facilitating WASA's compliance with the standard.
OWS 8- Claims for damage	WASA is required to: 1. Acknowledge within 5 working days of receipt of claim. 2. Complete investigation within 30 working days of receipt of claim. Determine liability and make payment, where applicable, within 60 working days of receipt of claim and required information.	WASA is required to: 1. Acknowledge within 5 working days of receipt of claim. 2. Complete investigation within 45 working days of receipt of claim. Determine liability and make payment, where applicable, within 90 working days of receipt of claim and required information.	To ensure that claims for damage are processed in a reasonable time while taking into account WASA's capabilities.

5. Moratorium on Specific Standards

The RIC proposed, in its 2020 Final Decision Document, that a moratorium be granted for five of the standards where it was determined that the service provider needed time to meet the stipulated performance requirements. This has now been extended to include one more standard: ***GWS 3 - Provision of truck-borne supply if mains supply is interrupted***. This decision was based on an in-depth discussion with the service provider and a review of current data and other information provided. The moratorium gives the service provider time to bring its performance into compliance with the standards. For each affected standard, the utility is required to submit an action plan detailing the timeline and steps that it will undertake to bring its performance up to the level required under the standard. The standards for which a moratorium will be granted are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: List of standards for which a moratorium is granted

Standard	Reason for the moratorium	Duration	Information to be submitted to the RIC by WASA
GWS 1 – Implementation of Water Schedules	To allow WASA the time to carry out the necessary upgrade of the network to bring the performance level up to the standard for service areas where the amount of water supplied is less than 48 hours per week.	24 months	WASA is required to identify the service areas where it cannot meet the standard, and submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to bring the level of supply in these areas up to the standard.
GWS 3 – Provision of Truck-borne supply if mains supply is interrupted	To allow WASA to implement systems to meet the requirements of the standard.	12 months	WASA is required to submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to bring its performance up to the standard.
GWS 5 - Installation of new Water Service Connections (WSC)	To allow WASA the time to clear the backlog of applications for new service connections, and to bring the level of performance up to the standard.	12 months	WASA is required to submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to bring its performance up to the standard.
OWS 2 - Water Pressure	To allow WASA to acquire and install the requisite data loggers and other equipment to monitor pressure within the distribution network.	24 months	WASA is required to submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to acquire and install the requisite equipment to monitor and report performance under the standard.
OWS 7 - Road restoration after pipeline works	To allow WASA to reduce the backlog of road restoration works and improve its ability to meet the standard	24 months	WASA is required to submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to reduce the backlog and bring its performance up to the standard.
OWS 9 - Making and Keeping appointments	To allow WASA time to acquire the requisite equipment to implement the standard	12 months	WASA is required to submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to implement the standard.

6. The Guaranteed Standards (Revised December 2023)

The RIC's Final Decision in December 2023 on the Guaranteed Standards is shown in Table 3. For each of these standards, as stated previously, WASA must meet the specified service level for each customer. If WASA fails to deliver the level of service required, the service provider is required to make compensatory payments to the affected customer as specified.

Table 3: The Guaranteed Standards – RIC's Final Decision after Further Consultation with WASA

Guaranteed Standard	Required Performance Level	Compensation to customer for noncompliance (% of monthly [1]bill)
GWS 1-Implementation of Water Schedules	WASA is required to provide a minimum supply of 48 hours aggregate per week at 5 psi (minimum), except in areas where a moratorium has been granted. *WASA will be granted a moratorium for 24 months for areas where the service provider cannot meet the standard. WASA is required to provide a minimum supply of 24 hours per week for areas under a moratorium. WASA is required to identify the areas where it cannot meet the standard, and submit an action plan detailing steps to bring these areas up to the standard within the moratorium period.*	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B
GWS 2- Restoration of Supply after service interruption	<u>For Planned Interruptions:</u> WASA is required to restore supply as per published times, but no later than 48 hours after start of interruption. <u>For Unplanned Interruptions:</u> WASA to restore supply to customers within: • 72 hrs for trunk mains. • 48 hrs for strategic mains. • 24 hrs for other interruptions.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For an additional 12 hours:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B

[1] The penalty payment is calculated as a percentage of the monthly bill amount for all customer classes, including class A customers, which are billed quarterly.

Guaranteed Standard	Required Performance Level	Compensation to customer for noncompliance (% of monthly [1]bill)
GWS 3- Provision of Truck - borne supply if mains supply is interrupted	<u>For Planned interruptions:</u> WASA is required to provide a maximum of 600 gallons per Class A customers' requests, and a maximum of 1200 gallons per Classes B, C, D and E customers' requests, within 48 hours after the notified time for interruption has ended if pipe-borne supply is not yet available. <u>For Unplanned interruptions:</u> WASA is required to provide a maximum of 600 gallons per Class A customers' requests, and a maximum of 1200 gallons per Classes B, C, D and E customers' requests, from 48 hours after the start of the disruption and within the next 48 hours if pipe-borne supply is not yet available.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For an additional 24 hours:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B
GWS 4- Time to repair to Water Service Connections (WSC)	WASA is required to repair a Water Service Connection (WSC): 1. Within 3 days of report by customer – for loss of supply to registered critical institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals) and for leaks resulting in damage to property. 2. Within 7 days – for leaks & loss of supply affecting supply to customer.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For every additional 12 hours up to a maximum of two periods:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B
GWS 5- Installation of new Water Service Connections (WSC)	WASA is required to complete the various stages for installation of a new Water Service Connection within the specified time as follows: **<u>For (¾") WSC (Domestic) and 1"- 4" (Multiple family dwelling units)</u>** 1. Determine feasibility and notify customer within 10 working days of application. 2. Install WSC within 15 working days following payment of applicable rates. **<u>For 1" and above - ALL other WSC</u>** 1. Provide Outline Approval within 20 working days upon completion of initial water and wastewater site works. 2. Issue response to Design Approval within 20 working days of receipt of acceptable engineering design. 3. Issue Final Approval within 20 working days of receipt of inspection report. 4. Process and complete pressure testing works within 10 working days. 5. Generate Meter Accounts within 18 working days. 6. Complete interconnection within 15 working days of receipt of payment. 7. Notify customer and issue completion certificate within 7 working days. *WASA will be granted a moratorium for 12 months. WASA to submit an action plan detailing steps that will be taken and timelines to enable implementation of the standard.*	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For an additional 24 hours:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B

Guaranteed Standard	Required Performance Level	Compensation to customer for noncompliance (% of monthly [1]bill)
GWS 6- Reconnection of supply after settling outstanding accounts or disconnection due to error	WASA is required to reconnect the water supply to a customer: • Within 1 working day of receipt of full payment and reconnection fee, or as per agreement with WASA for installations with a curb valve or when it has been determined by WASA that an error was made. • Within 3 working days for installations with no curb valve.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For an additional 24 hours:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B 3% - Class B
GWS 7- Response to complaints	WASA is required to respond to complaints as follows: 1. Acknowledge complaint within 5 working days of receipt of complaint. 2. Provide a substantive response within 30 working days of receipt of complaint.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For an additional 24 hours:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B
GWS 8- Response to Poor Water Quality	WASA is required to: 1. Respond, and conduct site visit where necessary, within 1 working day of being notified. 2. Solve problem within 3 working days of site visit. 3. Provide an alternative water supply where applicable.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B
GWS 9- Compensatory payments for guaranteed standards	WASA is required to make compensatory payment to customer within 60 working days of receipt of claim.	15% - Classes A, C, D, E 3% - Class B *For an additional 7 days:* 5% - Classes A, C, D, E 1% - Class B

7. The Overall Standards (Revised December 2023)

The RIC's Final Decision (revised December 2023) on the Overall Standards is shown in Table 4. These standards, as previously stated, cover areas of service where it is not usually appropriate or feasible to give an individual guarantee, and as such, do not carry compensatory payment.

Table 4: The Overall Standards – RIC's Final Decision after Further Consultation with WASA

Overall Standard	Required Performance Level
OWS 1- Notification with respect to planned supply interruptions	WASA is required to notify customers that will be affected by a planned supply interruption at least 48 hours prior to the interruption if it is expected to last for more than 4 hours.
OWS 2- Water Pressure	The water pressure provided by WASA at the Water Service Connection (WSC) point to customers (who are not on a schedule) must be: Minimum 10m head of pressure (15 psi). Maximum 70m head of pressure (100 psi). *WASA will be granted a moratorium for 24 months. WASA to submit an action plan detailing steps that will be taken and timelines to enable implementation of the standard. WASA will submit progress reports during the moratorium and the RIC will monitor implementation progress of the action plan.*
OWS 3- Metering	WASA is required to: 1. Read meter at least every 2 billing cycles for all categories of customers. 2. Issue bills within 10 working days of meter reading. 3. Repair defective water meters within 30 days of receipt of report.
OWS 4- Drinking water quality	WASA is required to: 1. Sample drinking water supply according to an established schedule. 2. Ensure 100% compliance with WHO guidelines for bacteriological thresholds (water). 3. Ensure at least 95% compliance with WHO guidelines for physical/chemical parameters (water).
OWS 5- Sewage effluent quality	WASA is required to be in compliance with the effluent discharge standard of the water pollution rules or equivalent standard as set by the relevant authority having such jurisdiction.

Overall Standard	Required Performance Level
OWS 6- Repair to sewers	WASA is required to: 1. Clear choke in WASA sewer system within 18 hours of receipt of report of overflow. 2. Repair collapse of WASA sewer system within 72 hours of receipt of report.
OWS 7- Road restoration after pipeline works	After completion of pipeline works, WASA is required to carry out temporary restoration of roads within 24 hours and permanent restoration within 7 working days, in accordance with the road restoration guidelines issued by the Ministry of Works or equivalent entity. *WASA will be granted a moratorium for 24 months. WASA to submit an action plan for bringing performance up to the standard, and to report performance data during the moratorium.*
OWS 8- Claims for damage	WASA is required to: 1. Acknowledge within 5 working days of receipt of claim. 2. Complete investigation within 45 working days of receipt of claim. 3. Determine liability and make payment, where applicable, within 90 working days of receipt of claim and required information.
OWS 9- Making and Keeping appointments	WASA personnel are required to: 1. Arrive within 60 minutes of scheduled time of appointment. 2. Notify customer no less than 1 working day before appointment of inability to keep it. *WASA will be granted a moratorium for 12 months. WASA is required to submit an action plan detailing the steps that it will take to implement the standard.*