

Rule 003

(Formerly EUB Directive 003)

Regulated Service Provider (RSP) Service Standard and Reliability Performance, Monitoring, and Reporting Rules

The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC/Commission) has approved this rule on January 2, 2008.

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1 (1) Definitions

In these rules:

- (a) “Annual Report” means the annual quality of service measurement report;
 - (b) “Commission” means the Alberta Utilities Commission;
 - (c) “EUA” means the *Electric Utilities Act*;
 - (d) “GUA” means the *Gas Utilities Act*;
 - (e) “RRT” means a regulated rate tariff under the EUA or a default rate tariff under the GUA;
 - (f) “RSP(s)” means a regulated rate provider under the EUA or a gas distributor or default supply provider under the GUA;
- (2) These rules apply to an RSP under the Commission’s jurisdiction.

2 Measurement and Reporting Protocol

For the purposes of collecting data and reporting on performance in each of the categories established in Section 3, the RSP must comply with the following information filing requirements:

- 1) Reporting periods are calendar quarters, with quarterly reports submitted to the Commission by the last day of the month following the end of each quarter (Quarterly Report), except for the measure detailed in Section 4, which must be reported annually, as part of the Annual Report.
- 2) Submission of the Annual Report must be no later than the last day of the month following the end of the calendar year.
- 3) RSPs that provide both regulated electricity and gas services are permitted to report their performance on an aggregated basis, but should keep separate the raw data for each regulated service and provide these data to the AUC upon request.
- 4) For the purpose of preparing the Quarterly Reports, performance results must be aggregated monthly and quarterly and reported as monthly and quarterly averages.
- 5) For the purpose of preparing the Annual Report, performance results must be aggregated monthly and annually and reported as monthly and annual averages.
- 6) Quarterly and annual averages must be derived from raw data, not by averaging monthly averages.
- 7) Performance must be evaluated and reported to one decimal place for all performance categories unless otherwise specified. Actual performance must be rounded up when the second decimal place is 5 or more.

- 8) The RSP must retain all of its reports that support the results for each of the performance categories for a period of not less than 24 months after the results are reported. The RSP must provide these reports to the Commission upon request.
- 9) The RSP must advise the Commission of any change to the RSP's measurement protocol or to the internal reporting methods used to obtain the data measured related to this rule and provide an explanation for the change. Immediately after becoming aware of the missing data or events, the RSP must report missing data or other events that could reasonably affect the quality of the data. Any data related to this rule that reflects significantly altered measurement procedures or internal data acquisition methods are subject to Commission review and approval.
- 10) If the Commission is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist, the Commission may waive any applicable performance standard upon request by the RSP. The burden is on the RSP to demonstrate that its level of preparedness and response was reasonable in light of the circumstances surrounding the failure to meet the standard.
- 11) The RSP must initiate a meeting with the Commission at least once annually to discuss service quality issues, trends in service quality data reported by the RSP, including any corrective action plans proposed by the RSP to remedy failing performance standards, issues raised by customer complaints filed with the Commission, and other policy issues relating to customer service. Meetings may occur more frequently at the Commission's discretion.

3 Performance Categories and Standards

This section establishes the performance categories and standards to be met by RSPs and outlines the information required by the Commission for it to accomplish its surveillance function with respect to service standards as provided for under this rule.

3.1 Call Answer Performance Measures

The RSP's call centre is a centralized facility that is either established or outsourced by the RSP to handle calls and other inquiries from customers to the RSP's customer service representatives.

Data for call answer performance measures must be obtained from monitoring applications used on the RSP's telephone switch and, if applicable, the RSP's interactive voice response (IVR) system. The reports available on the phone switch include the historical number of calls that have been transferred by the IVR to the RSP's call centre automated call distribution (ACD).

3.1.1 Call Answering Service Level

This measure tracks the percentage of attempted customer calls that within 30 seconds successfully reach an RSP's representative who is ready to accept or provide information. The data includes all calls transferred from the IVR to the call centre ACD. The measure is to be calculated as a monthly average as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of calls reaching a company representative within 30 seconds}}{\text{Number of attempts to reach a company representative}}$$

The minimum performance standard for Call Answering Service Level is 70%.

3.1.2 Abandon Rate

This measure tracks the percentage of all callers attempting to reach an RSP's representative that hang up after being transferred from the IVR to the call centre ACD. The measure is to be calculated as a monthly average as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of all calls abandoned}}{\text{Number of attempts to reach a company representative}}$$

The performance for this category must not exceed 5%.

3.2 Billing Performance Measures

The data for these measurements must be obtained from the RSP's customer information system (CIS).

3.2.1 RRT Bills Not Rendered on Time

This measure tracks the percentage of bills not rendered within seven days of the scheduled billing date. It is to be calculated as follows and reported to the third decimal place:

$$\frac{\text{Number of RRT bills not rendered within seven days of the scheduled billing date}}{\text{Total number of RRT bills scheduled to be rendered}}$$

Exclusions: This measurement does not include accounts activated within 10 days prior to the normal billing cycle, accounts scheduled to receive a final bill within 10 days after the normal billing cycle, bills not rendered due to inadequate billing information provided by wire owners/gas distributors regarding distribution and transmission charges or consumption amounts, and RSP-use accounts.

The performance for this category must not exceed 0.500%.

3.2.2 RRT Bills Found to Be Inaccurate

This measure tracks, on a monthly basis, the percentage of bills that were found to be inaccurate due to a billing error. A billing error is an administrative error such as a typographic, keying, or other transcribing error, a computational or similar error of an accounting nature, or an omission of an authorized charge or inclusion of an unauthorized charge made by the RSP that results in an incorrect or incomplete charge or bill. This measure is to be calculated as follows and reported to the second decimal place:

$$\frac{\text{Number of bills rendered inaccurately for the billing cycle}}{\text{Total number of bills rendered for the billing cycle}}$$

Exclusions: This standard does not include bills found to be inaccurate strictly as a result of estimation, bills where the inaccuracy was discovered prior to their issuance to customers, or bills where the fault does not lie with the RSP. Multiple bills for a customer that are caused by the same error are counted as one incident.

The performance for this category must not exceed 1.00%.

3.2.3 Inaccurate RRT Bills Corrected

This measure tracks, on a monthly basis, the number of inaccurate RRT bills that were corrected and the resulting adjustments reflected on a subsequent bill. This measure is to be calculated as follows and reported to the second decimal place:

$$\frac{\text{Number of adjusted RRT bills rendered for the billing cycle}}{\text{Total number of RRT bills rendered inaccurately}}$$

The performance for this category must be at least 95% of the inaccurate RRT bills corrected within the next two billing cycles following the issuance of the inaccurate RRT bills.

3.3 Customer Satisfaction Measures—Transaction Survey

3.3.1 Customer Satisfaction Following Customer-Initiated Contact with the RSP

For this measure, the RSP must report the level of customer satisfaction using the results from its internal customer satisfaction survey process or from the survey process of an independent third-party agency. RSPs that conduct surveys throughout the year must report the results quarterly. RSPs that conduct surveys annually must report the results as part of the Annual Report. The RSP must use the sampling method described in the appendix. The survey instrument must be a telephone questionnaire using survey questions provided by the Commission, in addition to any questions that the RSPs may want to add.

The performance for this category must be at least 75% of customers satisfied with their last transaction with the RSP.

3.3.2 Complaint Response

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of grievance or dissatisfaction from a customer about a decision, an action taken, or a failure to act by the RSP that

- was received by the Commission, or
- was not resolved by the RSP's customer service representative after the initial customer contact and needed to be escalated internally by the RSP.

A request for information about the RSP is not considered a complaint for purposes of this plan.

If the complaint is in writing and is referred to the RSP by the Commission, the RSP must prepare a complaint report (Complaint Report), including supporting documentation, outlining its understanding of the nature of the complaint, the customer's expected outcome, the findings of the RSP, and the actions taken or to be taken by the RSP to satisfy the customer's expectations.

The RSP must provide Complaint Reports to the Commission according to the following standards:

- 80% of the complaints directed to the RSP in any given month must be investigated and a Complaint Report provided within 14 calendar days of receipt of the complaint; and

- 100% of the complaints directed to the RSP in any given month must be investigated and a Complaint Report provided within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

If the RSP needs additional time to fully resolve a complaint and provide a Complaint Report, the RSP must, within the initial 30-day period, request a specific additional time for response and provide a full resolution of the complaint within the requested additional time.

If a verbal complaint is received by the Commission, the Commission will notify the RSP of the information forming the basis of the complaint and will provide the RSP with an opportunity to investigate the accuracy of the information and provide its findings to the Commission. The Commission will make a determination to either dismiss the complaint or to refer it to the RSP to address. The RSP must prepare a Complaint Report for any verbal complaint that is referred by the Commission to the RSP.

If the complaint is made directly to the RSP, either verbally or in writing, the RSP must investigate the matter using methods reasonable under the circumstances.

The RSP must report the actual number of complaints investigated in a given month, as well as the number of complaints for which it did not provide a resolution to the complainant within 30 days of the escalation of the complaint.

Resolution, in the context of customer complaints, means that the RSP has examined the complainant's claims, conducted any necessary investigation, and done one of the following:

- taken the action the customer requests,
- taken an action the customer and the RSP agree is an acceptable compromise,
- provided the customer with information that demonstrates that the situation complained of is not reasonably within the control of the RSP, or
- refused to take action the customer requested and communicated that refusal, including reasons, to the customer.

4 Overall Customer Satisfaction Measures

4.1 Customer Satisfaction with the RSP

This performance must be measured once annually. Using an independent third-party agent or its own internal survey process, the RSP must survey a sample of the RSP's customers to assess general customer satisfaction in the following areas:

- performance and satisfaction with customer service (access to the RSP)
- accurate and mistake-free billing
- employees who are understanding, courteous, and informative

The RSP (or third-party agent) must use the sampling method described in the appendix.

The minimum performance standard is 75% of customers with overall satisfaction in the three defined areas.

5 Service Guarantee

Subject to Commission approval of any necessary tariff amendments, the RSP must provide a credit of \$75 to any customer who is erroneously provided with a written notice of pending disconnection of service or of referral to a credit agency or whose service was disconnected in error.

Notwithstanding the above requirement, the RSP shall not be required to provide the \$75 credit where:

- The RSP's written notice and the customer's payment crossed in the mail.
- The RSP's written notice was in mail transit at the time the customer made or attempted to make payment by visiting the premises of an authorized payment acceptance establishment, such as a bank, trust company or credit union.
- The wire owner or gas distributor disconnected a customer in error, rather than as instructed by the RSP.
- The RSP's written notice was properly mailed, but the customer did not pick up the mail from locations such as a post office, super mail box, or home mail box.
- The RSP's written notice was undelivered by the mail delivery service.
- The customer attempted to make payment to the person dispatched by the wire owner or gas distributor to disconnect the service but that person was not authorized to accept payment.

Appendix – Customer Satisfaction Survey Design

Customer Satisfaction Survey Following Customer-Initiated Contact with the RSP

The focus of the customer satisfaction survey is on feedback from residential, farm, irrigation, and small commercial customers who have recently contacted their RSP. The survey is limited to customers who contacted the RSP through the company's call centre, by e-mail, or via the RSP's Web site.

The customer satisfaction survey is to include either a monthly or an annual study of customer contacts made with the RSP within, at most, 30 days after the RSP/customer interaction has taken place. The RSP will select a random sample from its database of all customer contacts. The study must achieve a minimum of 400 RSP completed interviews each year. The recommended sample size of 400 is designed to have a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error at the 95% confidence level.

The RSP must attempt to reach the person who contacted the RSP. Customers who have been surveyed within the past 12 months are excluded from the survey, as are customers who earlier indicated that they did not wish to be surveyed. Finally, through a survey question, any customer who has been employed by the RSP within the past two years or whose household contains someone who has been employed by the RSP within the past two years, is not to be included in the survey. If the customer who contacted the RSP is not available, up to two callbacks are to be completed in order to obtain the customer's opinion.

The survey must include questions to measure access to the RSP, employee courtesy, employee knowledge, promptness and timeliness of the RSP's response, and customer satisfaction with the interaction.

The survey questions must include those developed by the Commission. As part of the survey process, the questionnaire may be revised in the future if it is determined that this will result in obtaining better information. The RSP is permitted to incorporate its own questions into the transactional survey, but the Commission survey questions are to be asked first, followed by the RSP's questions.

Overall Satisfaction Survey

The overall satisfaction survey must include an annual study of the RSP's entire customer base. The study must be reported annually during the first quarter reporting period of the following year. The RSP must select a random sample from its database of all customers and the study must achieve a minimum of 400 completed interviews.