

Rule 003

Service Quality and Reliability Performance Monitoring and Reporting for Regulated Rate Providers and Default Supply Providers

The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or Commission) has approved this rule on XX XX, 2010.

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1 Definitions

In these rules:

- (a) “Annual Report” means the reporting of service quality and reliability performance, as detailed in this Rule 003, prepared and submitted annually in accordance with Section 2.2;
- (b) “Commission” means the Alberta Utilities Commission;
- (c) “default supply provider” has the meaning ascribed to the term in the *Gas Utilities Act*;
- (d) “Quarterly Report” means the reporting of service quality and reliability performance metrics, as detailed in this Rule 003, prepared and submitted quarterly in accordance with Section 2.1;
- (e) “RSP” means a regulated rate provider as defined in the *Electric Utilities Act* or a default supply provider as defined in Part 2.1 of the *Gas Utilities Act*;
- (f) “regulated rate provider” has the meaning ascribed to the term in the *Electric Utilities Act*;
- (g) “Rule 003” means this AUC Rule 003: Service Quality and Reliability Performance Monitoring and Reporting for Regulated Rate and Default Supply Providers.

2 Measurement and Reporting Protocol

For the purpose of collecting data and reporting on performance in each of the categories established in Section 3 and 4, the RSP must comply with the following information filing requirements:

2.1 Quarterly Report

- (1) Reporting periods shall be calendar quarters, with Quarterly Reports submitted to the Commission by the last day of the month following the end of each quarter.
- (2) Unless specifically identified as being reported only in the Annual Report, metrics identified as required in this Rule 003 are required to be reported in the Quarterly Reports.
- (3) RSPs that are both regulated rate providers and default supply providers have the option of submitting two Quarterly Reports each quarter, one for electricity and one for gas, or providing one combined Quarterly Report but keeping separate raw data for each service as backup, in order to be able to provide the data to the AUC upon request.

2.2 Annual Report

- (1) The Annual Report shall be submitted to the Commission no later than the last day of February following the end of the calendar year.

- (2) RSPs that are both regulated rate providers and default supply providers have the option of submitting two Annual Reports each year, one for electricity and one for gas, or providing one combined Annual Report but keeping separate raw data for each service as backup, in order to be able to provide the data to the AUC upon request.
- (3) The Annual Report shall consist of an accumulation of the quantitative data reported in the Quarterly Reports, additional annual metrics and qualitative information required for explaining trends, corrective action plans and reasons for variances from standards.
- (4) Whenever the minimum performance standards set out in Sections 3 are not met by an RSP, the reasons for failing to meet the standard and the corrective actions taken must be explained in the Annual Report. If the Commission is satisfied that exceptional circumstances existed, the Commission may waive any applicable performance standard in the event of a failure to meet that standard. The burden shall be 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.
- (5) The RSP must advise the Commission of any change to the RSP's internal reporting methods that may impact its ability to comply with this Rule 003 and provide an explanation for the change. Any data related to this rule that reflects significantly altered measurement procedures or internal data acquisition methods shall be subject to Commission review and approval.

2.3 Annual Meeting

- (1) 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.

2.4 Templates for Quarterly and Annual Reports

- (1) The templates (and instructions for completion) for reporting performance results to the Commission are available on the Rule 003 website at www.auc.ab.ca.
- (2) In order to allow the Annual Report to accumulate the data provided in the Quarterly Reports, the RSP must enter data for the second, third and fourth quarter Quarterly Reports in the same copy of the template used by the RSP for the previous quarter(s).
- (3) Quantitative data and graphical depiction of the data are the outputs of the templates.
- (4) Qualitative explanations as required by this Rule 003 for the Annual Report are considered part of the Annual Report but are not included as part of the templates.

A letter or Word document containing the required qualitative information for the Annual Report must accompany the quantitative data and graphical depiction of the data that are outputs from the templates.

2.5 Backups and Missing Data

- (1) The RSP must retain any documentation that is required as backup for the Quarterly and Annual Reports for not less than 24 months after the results are reported. The RSP must provide these reports to the Commission upon request.
- (2) The RSP must report missing data or other events that could reasonably affect the quality of the data immediately after becoming aware of the missing data or events.

3 Performance Categories and Standards

This section establishes the performance categories and, where applicable, the standards to be met by RSPs and outlines the information required by the Commission for it to accomplish its regulatory function with respect to service quality standards as provided for under this rule. Unless specifically identified as being only reported in the Annual Report, metrics identified as required in this Rule 003 are required to be reported in each of the Quarterly Reports and the Annual Report.

3.1 Call Answer Performance Measures

This category focuses on metrics related to the monthly performance of the call centre, established or outsourced by the RSP, which handles calls from RSP customers by the RSP's customer service representatives (RSP representative). For those RSPs that do not maintain separate phone numbers and, therefore, separate call statistics, for their RSP-related call answering distinct from call answering related to other services they may provide, the RSPs shall provide the combined call answer metrics and clearly note in the Annual Report the various services that are included in the call answer statistics.

In measuring call answer performance, this Rule 003 does not measure performance related to customers who call the RSP and obtain the information they require from the RSP's interactive voice response (IVR) system. Rather, calls to be measured by this metric are those calls that are 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 customer calls answered by an RSP representative that are answered within 30 seconds. The data includes only those calls transferred from the IVR to the call centre ACD and answered by an RSP representative. The measure is to be calculated as a monthly average, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of calls reaching an RSP representative within 30 seconds}}{\text{Total number of calls reaching an RSP representative}}$$

The minimum performance standard for this measure is 70%. In addition to providing the monthly percentage, the RSP must provide the numerator and denominator from which the percentage is derived.

3.1.2 Abandon Rate

This measure tracks the percentage of all callers attempting to reach an RSP representative that hang up after selecting an option through the IVR and after being transferred from the IVR to the call centre ACD. This measure excludes those calls where callers hang up within 5 seconds of being transferred from the IVR, to account for the callers that may have realized they selected the wrong option from the IVR. The measure is to be calculated as a monthly average, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Numbers of calls where the caller hangs up after being transferred from the IVR}}{\text{Total number of calls transferred by the IVR to the ACD}}$$

The performance for this category must not exceed 5%. In addition to providing the monthly percentage, the RSP must provide the numerator and denominator from which the percentage is derived.

3.2 Billing Performance Measures

The metrics in this category track billing performance as it relates to the normal billing operations of the RSP. Alternatively, when a major event occurs at any step in the billing process which causes 100% of the RSP's bills to be delayed by more than one business day, the RSP must notify the AUC within one business day of becoming aware of the major event.

The reporting of the number of sites overdue for billing, and for how long, will alert the AUC to situations where the RSP is experiencing difficulties billing some customers that will likely result in customer complaints. Monthly tariff billing performance metrics provide visibility to the AUC of the RSP's performance in processing Tariff Billing Files according to the rules defined in AUC Rule 004: Tariff Billing Code.

3.2.1 Sites Overdue for Billing

The RSP shall identify all cases where, as of the end of the quarter being reported in the Quarterly Report, the RSP has received TBF charges (see AUC Rule 004: Tariff Billing Code) for a site but a customer has not been billed those charges for more than one month (Outstanding TBF Charges).

The RSP shall report the number and percentage of sites with Outstanding TBF Charges and the number of kWhs outstanding. When there are multiple months of Outstanding TBF Charges for the same site, the RSP shall count the site only once in the metric and report how long it has been since the oldest Outstanding TBF Charges

were received relative to the end of the quarter. The groupings for reporting are as follows:

- (a) 1 to 2 Months
- (b) 2 to 3 Months
- (c) 3 to 4 Months
- (d) 4 to 5 Months
- (e) 5 to 6 Months
- (f) 6 to 12 Months
- (g) More than 12 Months

For the number of kWhs, the RSP shall track and report each month's Outstanding TBF charges separately and independently from the sites.

For example, if an RSP last billed a site on December 31, 2009 but has since received TBF charges on January 20th, February 20th and March 20th, 2010, for 1000 kWhs each month, and the RSP is preparing the Quarterly Report for the quarter ending March 31, 2010, the Outstanding TBF Charges are those received January 20th and February 20th, but not March 20th, as the charges received March 20th were received less than a month before the end of the quarter. The site will be counted only once in the metric and will be reported in the group of Outstanding TBF Charges that are "2 to 3 Months" outstanding, as the oldest Outstanding TBF Charges were received January 20th and not billed as of March 31st, a gap of more than two months but less than three. The kWhs, however, will be reported as 1000 kWhs in the "1 to 2 Months" grouping and another 1000 kWhs in the "2 to 3 Months" grouping.

In addition, the RSP shall separate each of the metrics (site count and the kWhs) into the following two categories:

- (a) Sites and kWhs where the RSP has a customer to bill (customer information available)
- (b) Sites and kWhs where the RSP does not have customer information in order to bill (customer information not available).

This statistic is intended to reflect the fact that reasons for not billing tend to be different depending on whether or not customer information is known by the RSP. If customer information is available, not billing the site may be indicative of issues with the billing system or with billing processes. If customer information is not available to the RSP, the RSP is likely not billing for that reason. Ways to address the latter situation have more to do with processes around locating customer names and billing addresses rather than with issues with the billing system. Both are problems, but their impacts and solutions can be very different.

3.2.2 Monthly Tariff Billing Performance

The RSP shall report monthly and quarterly metrics for responses it sent for TBF files it received after performing file format validations and file content validations (see AUC Rule 004: Tariff Billing Code).

For file format validations, the RSP shall report the following monthly and quarterly numbers:

- (a) Average number of business days following receipt of TBF files to complete standard file format validation tests and send TBA or TBR transactions. The target is a maximum of one business day.
- (b) Number of TBRs sent.
- (c) Number of TBRs rejected as invalid by the recipient.

For file content validations, the RSP shall report the following monthly and quarterly numbers:

- (a) Average number of business days following receipt of TBF files to complete standard file content validation tests and send TBD transactions. The target is a maximum of two business days.
- (b) Number of TBDs sent.
- (c) Number of TBDs rejected as invalid by the recipient.

3.3 Customer Satisfaction Measures

3.3.1 Percentage of Customer Satisfaction Following Customer-Initiated Contact with the RSP (Annual Report Only)

For this measure, the RSP must report the level of customer satisfaction using the results from its internal customer satisfaction survey process or using the results from the survey process of an independent third-party agency. Whether the RSP conducts surveys on an ongoing basis throughout the year or it conducts the survey on an annual basis, the RSP shall report the results as part of the Annual Report. The RSP must use the sampling methodology described in Appendix A. The survey instrument must be a telephone questionnaire using survey questions also listed in Appendix A, as well as any additional questions that the RSP may add.

The minimum performance standard for this customer performance measure is 75% of customers must agree with the statements about the RSP (see Appendix A).

3.3.2 Overall Customer Satisfaction Measures (Annual Report Only)

The RSP must measure overall customer satisfaction 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:

- (a) customer service

- (b) accurate and timely billing

The RSP (or third-party agent) must use the sampling methodology described in Appendix B. The survey instrument must be a telephone questionnaire using survey questions also listed in Appendix B, as well as any additional questions that the RSP may add.

The minimum performance standard is 75% of customers must agree with the statements about the RSP (see Appendix B).

3.3.3 Complaint Response

The RSP shall track and report customer-specific issues brought forward to the RSP by the AUC (Complaints), whether written or verbal, and report the number of days required to close each Complaint. Once a Complaint has been initiated, it cannot be reported closed until all of the following conditions have been met:

- (1) The RSP has provided to the AUC any information requested by the AUC regarding the Complaint.
- (2) The AUC has not indicated that the Complaint must remain open until the AUC is able to contact the customer.
- (3) If corrections to the customer's account are required, the RSP has either identified to the AUC when the customer can expect to see those corrections or the RSP has provided details regarding steps that will be taken to correct the account.

The RSP must close Complaints according to the following standards:

- (1) 80% of the Complaints directed to the RSP in any given month must be closed within 14 calendar days of receipt of the Complaint; and
- (2) 100% of the Complaints directed to the RSP in any given month must be closed within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Complaint.

3.4 Service Guarantee

- (1) The RSP must provide a credit of \$75 to any customer who is subject to one of the following errors made by the RSP:
 - (a) Customer was provided written notice of pending disconnection of service in error;
 - (b) Customer was provided written notice of pending referral to a credit agency in error;
 - (c) Customer was referred to a credit agency in error; or
 - (d) Customer experienced disconnection of service in error.
- (2) Payment of the \$75 credit is not required where no error has been made by the RSP, and in particular is not required in the following circumstances:

- (a) The RSP's written notice of pending disconnection [or pending referral to a credit agency] was not issued in error, and such notice and the customer's payment crossed in the mail.
- (b) The RSP's written notice of pending disconnection [or pending referral to a credit agency] was not issued in error, and such 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.
- (c) The electric or gas distributor disconnected a customer in error, rather than as instructed by the RSP.
- (d) The RSP's written notice of pending disconnection [or pending referral to a credit agency] was not issued in error, and such 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.
- (e) The RSP's written notice of pending disconnection [or pending referral to a credit agency] was not issued in error, and such notice was undelivered by the mail delivery service.
- (f) The customer attempted to make payment to the person dispatched by the electric or gas distributor to disconnect the service, where such disconnection was not made in error, but that person was not authorized to accept payment.

The requirement for the RSP to provide a \$75 credit to any customer who is subject to one of the errors made by the RSP cited in (1) above, must be stated in any Terms and Conditions filed by the RSP with the Commission, along with the exceptions noted in (2) above

The RSP must track and report all instances when a customer was eligible for the \$75 credit as a result of the RSP's error.

Appendix A – Customer-Initiated Contact Satisfaction Survey

Customer Satisfaction Survey Following Customer-Initiated Contact with the RSP

The focus of this Customer Satisfaction Survey is on customers who have recently contacted their RSP. The survey is limited to customers who contacted the RSP by phone, email or via the RSP's website.

RSPs can choose their own frequency for administering the Customer Satisfaction Survey, but the responses shall be amalgamated throughout the year and reported in the Annual Report.

The Customer Satisfaction Survey includes a study of customer contacts made with the RSP within, at most, 30 days after the RSP/customer interaction has taken place. The RSP selects a random sample from its database of all customer-initiated contacts. The study must achieve a minimum sample of 400 completed questionnaires 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 by the RSP shall be excluded from the survey, as shall customers who earlier indicated that they do 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 shall not be included in the survey.

The survey must include the following questions:

For each of the following statements please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statement:

- a. [INSERT NAME OF RSP] makes it easy for customers to reach them.
- b. [INSERT NAME OF RSP] provides excellent service.
- c. [INSERT NAME OF RSP] provides reliable service.
- d. When I contacted [INSERT NAME OF RSP], the person or people I spoke to were knowledgeable.
- e. They were courteous and helpful.
- f. They were able to resolve my problem or answer my question.

Appendix B – Overall Satisfaction Survey

Overall Customer Satisfaction Survey

The focus of this Overall Satisfaction Survey is on customers who are customers of the RSP at the time of the survey. The survey must be administered annually and the results reported in the Annual Report.

Respondents are chosen randomly from the customer base of the RSP. The study must achieve a minimum sample of 400 completed questionnaires each year. The recommended sample size of 400 is designed to have a $\pm 5\%$ sampling error at the 95% confidence level.

Customers who have been surveyed within the past 12 months by the RSP shall be excluded from the survey, as shall customers who earlier indicated previously to the RSP that they do 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 shall not be included in the survey.

The survey must include the following questions:

For each of the following statements please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statement about [INSERT NAME OF RSP]:

- a. They make it easy for customers to reach them.
- b. They resolve issues or problems in a reasonable amount of time.
- c. They send bills to customers on time.
- d. They send correct and accurate bills to customers.
- e. They make their bills easy to understand.
- f. They provide good service to their customers.