

# Rule 003

## Service Quality Reporting for Energy Service Providers

This rule as amended was approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission on December 16, 2020, and is effective December 17, 2020.

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# 1 General provisions

## 1.1 Rule application

- (1) The quality of service provided to customers by a default supply provider or a regulated rate provider is monitored under this Rule 003. The quality of service provided by owners of electric distribution systems that are electric utilities, as defined in the *Electric Utilities Act*, and by gas distributors, as defined in the *Gas Utilities Act*, is measured and monitored under Rule 002: *Service Quality and Reliability Performance Monitoring and Reporting for Owners of Electric Distribution Systems and for Gas Distributors*, even if that service is to the same sites or customers as those provided under this rule.
- (2) Section 3.4 of this rule applies to Energy Service Providers (ESP).

## 1.2 Definitions

In this rule,

- (a) “business day” means any day other than Saturday, Sunday or a statutory holiday in Alberta, except for Easter Monday;
- (b) “Commission” means the Alberta Utilities Commission;
- (c) “customer care operations” means the management of all customer interactions across various channels (e.g., apps, chat, email, telephone, social media and website);
- (d) “default supply provider” has the meaning ascribed to the term in Part 2.1 of the *Gas Utilities Act*;
- (e) “ESP” means an RSP, a retailer, a rural electrification association, and a municipally-owned electric utility;
- (f) “RSP” means a regulated rate provider or a default supply provider;
- (g) “regulated rate provider” has the meaning ascribed to the term in the *Electric Utilities Act*;
- (h) “retailer” has the meaning ascribed to the term in the *Electric Utilities Act* and the *Gas Utilities Act* but in this rule applies to retailers that serve customers who consume less than 250,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) or 2,500 gigajoules (GJ) annually;
- (i) “Rule 003 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 2.1;
- (j) “rural electrification association” has the meaning ascribed to the term in the *Electric Utilities Act*; and

- (k) “site” has the meaning given to it in Rule 021: *Settlement System Code Rules* and in Rule 028: *Natural Gas Settlement System Code Rules*.

### 1.3 Application of Section 3.4

For purposes of Section 3.4 of this rule,

- (a) “customer” includes a member receiving electricity services from a rural electrification association;
- (b) “customer bill” means an invoice issued to a customer;
- (c) “incorrect customer bill” means a bill issued to a customer that contains:
  - (i) an error in the name or address of the customer, or in the items referred to in Section 4 of the *Billing Regulation, 2003* for electricity services or in Section 9 of the *Default Gas Supply Regulation* for gas service; or
  - (ii) a calculation error;
- (d) “late customer bill” means a bill issued to a customer in excess of 90 days from the day the ESP received the tariff charge for the customer’s site displayed on the bill and the ESP had a record of the customer’s information for billing purposes at the time the tariff charges were received;
- (e) “tariff charge” has the meaning given to it in Rule 004: *Alberta Tariff Billing Code Rules*; and
- (f) “unexpected customer bill” means a bill issued by an ESP to a person who is not a customer of the ESP, or is a customer of the ESP but is not the person financially responsible for the bill.

## 2 Reporting

### 2.1 Rule 003 annual report

- (1) A Rule 003 annual report, reporting on customer care and support, billing and customer satisfaction measures, and any qualitative information to explain any trends, corrective action plans and reasons for variances in performance or outcomes, must be filed by the last day of February following the end of the calendar year.
- (2) An RSP is encouraged to include in its Rule 003 annual report the matters set out in sections 3.1 to 3.3.

## 2.2 Unexpected events

When an unexpected event occurs, the RSP must, using all reasonable efforts, notify the Commission within one business day, and in any event, no later than three business days, of becoming aware of the event.

## 2.3 Material changes to business practices

The RSP must notify the Commission of any proposed material change to the RSP's internal business practices that could have an impact on service quality performance to customers, and provide an explanation for the proposed change prior to implementing such a change.

# 3 Annual report performance categories

## 3.1 Customer care

- (1) Describe the structure of your organization's customer care operations (e.g., call-centre location(s), number of staff, the various channels used to interact with customers) and provide an explanation of any statistics and seasonality.
- (2) List the top three reasons for customers contacting your organization.
- (3) Explain how your organization addresses customers' concerns (e.g., first-call resolution process, escalation process).
- (4) Explain how your organization identifies, measures and meets its key performance indicators.

## 3.2 Billing

- (1) Explain how your organization:
  - (a) ensures the information in its customer accounts is accurate and complete;
  - (b) manages accounts in arrears;
  - (c) provides notice to customers of pending de-energization or disconnection;
  - (d) measures the success of its billing performance including timeliness, accuracy and completeness.
- (2) Provide the percentage of bills issued:
  - (a) by electronic means
  - (b) in paper format
- (3) Provide the percentage of customers on a budget billing plan.

### 3.3 Customer satisfaction measures

Explain how your organization:

- (1) Surveys customers:
  - (a) type of survey (e.g., transaction, random)
  - (b) method of surveying (e.g., telephone, email, web)
  - (c) issues canvassed
  - (d) nature of response (e.g., ranking on a scale, yes/no, open-ended)
  - (e) frequency of survey
  - (f) number of customers surveyed
  - (g) response rate
- (2) Uses the survey results:
  - (a) to assess meeting its key performance indicators
  - (b) as feedback for customer-care personnel
  - (c) to determine changes in processes
  - (d) to modify the questions asked

### 3.4 Billing services

#### 3.4.1 Billing requirements

- (1) For the purposes of this section, the “permissible disconnection period” means a disconnection that occurs:
  - (a) during the period between April 16 to October 14 of any year for electricity services, or April 15 to October 31 of any year for gas services, and
  - (b) when the temperature will be above 0 degrees Celsius in the 24-hour period after the proposed disconnection;
- (2) An ESP must not issue
  - (a) an incorrect customer bill;
  - (b) a late customer bill;
  - (c) an unexpected customer bill; or

- (d) more than one customer bill within 18 calendar days.
- (3) An ESP must not request the disconnection of a customer unless:
  - (a) the customer requests the disconnection;
  - (b) the customer's account is in arrears and the disconnection will occur within the permissible disconnection period;
  - (c) the customer is receiving electricity or gas service but fails to provide information or provides incorrect information for billing purposes and the disconnection will occur within the permissible disconnection period; or
  - (d) the premises or property served by a site reasonably appears to be vacant or unoccupied.
- (4) An ESP must not refer a customer to a credit agency, including a collection agency, unless the customer's account is in arrears.
- (5) An ESP must not provide written notice of:
  - (a) A pending disconnection except for the reasons set out in sections 3.4.1(3)(b) to (d).
  - (b) A pending referral to a credit agency, including a collection agency, unless the customer's account is in arrears.

### **3.4.2 Service guarantees**

- (1) If the ESP contravenes sections 3.4.1(3) to 3.4.1(5), the ESP must provide a credit of \$150 to the affected customer.
- (2) A regulated rate provider or default supply provider shall not include for recovery in a regulated rate tariff application or a default rate tariff application, service guarantee credits of \$150 paid to customers under this section.
- (3) Until the regulated rate provider or default supply provider applies to the Commission to change its terms and conditions of service to incorporate substantively sections 3.4.1(3) to 3.4.1(5), these sections are deemed to be included in its terms and conditions of service as of January 1, 2019.