



# **Guidelines for Guaranteed Standards of Service**

**V1**

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## 1. Introduction

Electricity customers are entitled to guaranteed minimum standards of performance, according to Condition 20 of the Distribution & Supply license. This guidance summarizes these standards as stipulated in the final price control document (2022-2025).

Each licensee is responsible for ensuring that it understands and correctly interprets its obligations under the Guaranteed Standard of Service (GSoS) scheme.

The Guaranteed Standard of Service applies to all customers. If a licensee fails to meet any of the guaranteed standards, customers are entitled to a payment. Payment to the customer can be done through a credit to his electricity customer account or through other suitable means of payment.

The customer should raise an official complaint/ claim within 30 working days of the claimed breach of GSoS to the licensed company in order for the company to investigate the issue and confirm the breach of GSoS (if any). Claims raised after 30 working days is not eligible for payment. Payments are provided based on customer complaints/ claim and no payment will be done automatically.

The licensed company should provide a response to customers according to the timeframe stipulated in Customer Complaint Handling Procedures. Days start from following day of claim date. The customer should raise a separate complaint/ claim for each breach of GSoS.

Details of the payments due are set out in table 1 below.

**Table 1: GSoS and customer compensation**

Customer issue	Guaranteed standard of service	Customer payment if standard not met (OR / incident)	Frequency	
Meter reading	GS-1	The customer's meter is read at least once in 6 months	20	Once every 6 consecutive months
	GS-2	The new account's first reading must be on the first or second reading cycle	10	One time only for each new account cycle
Complaint handling	GS-3	Customer's complaint (excluding GS-5 complaints) must be dealt within 10 days or less	5	One time for each officially registered complaint
	GS-4	A customer's complaint must be dealt with in 40 days or less	20	One time for each officially registered complaint
	GS-5	A full written explanation must be sent, or a visit must be arranged to investigate, within ten working days	15	One time for each officially registered complaint

Customer issue	Guaranteed standard of service	Customer payment if standard not met (OR / incident)	Frequency
	of receiving customer notification of a voltage problem to their property		
Customer connections	GS-6 Time taken to provide customers with a substantive response to the initial connection application must not exceed 15 days	10	One time for each connection application
	GS-7 The Time taken to provide the final connection from receipt of customer payment and the completion of any required network extension must not exceed 15 days	20	One time for each connection application
Reconnections	GS-8 Time taken to reconnect customers after disconnection for non-payment must not exceed 24 hours from receipt of payment	30	One time for each case
	GS-9 Time taken to reconnect a customer after a supply failure must not exceed 24 hours	30	One time for each case
	GS-10 Customers must be notified of a planned outage at least 2 days in advance	5	One time for each case
Payment to customer	Licenseses must credit the customer's account/ make a payment within 10 days in the event of a breach of a guaranteed standard	20	One time for each case

The Authority for Public Services Regulation monitors GSoS and endorses changes if necessary. Each licensee must inform electricity customers of their rights under the GSoS scheme.

## 2. Standards and Conditions

### 2.1. Meter reading

#### 2.1.1. GS-1: Customer's meter is read at least once in 6 months

Licenseses shall make the best reasonable effort to read all metering points on monthly basis according to the applicable rules and regulations.

GS-1 applied to accessible active customers subscribing to post-paid services (non-AMR/AMI). If for six consecutive reading cycles the licensee has failed to obtain the actual reading of the meter, the licensee shall make the appropriate payment to the customer according to Table 1. In case

of meter reading cannot be captured due to inaccessibility, the licensee shall retain evidence of the attempts to acquire the read.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-1 payment. These are:

- vacant locations;
- door locked permanently (DLP) accounts; Company should be able to demonstrate and prove DLP cases;
- customers with self-meter reading (SMR) agreement;
- prepaid accounts; or
- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the complaint.

### **2.1.2. GS-2: New account's first reading must be on the first or second reading cycle**

GS-2 applied to customers subscribing to post-paid service only.

Newly connected customers shall be added to the reading routes, as soon as they are connected, so that their meters are read during the same reading cycle. If the Licensee is unable to read the meter of the newly connected customer during the same reading cycle due to any reasonable circumstance, the Licensee shall ensure reading the meter of the newly connected customer during the next reading cycle.

The exception to the requirement to make a GS-2 payment:

- prepaid accounts; or
- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the complaint.

## **2.2. Complaint handling**

### **2.2.1. GS-3: Customer's complaint (excluding GS-5 complaints) must be dealt within 10 days or less**

This is applied for complaints submitted in accordance with the approved Customer Complaint Handling Procedures CCHP (first stage).

The time necessary to respond to a complaint in working days between the opening of the complaint and the time of providing an explanation to the customer about the nature of the complaint and the solution that will be implemented. This time should not exceed 10 working days starting from the day following the date of receipt.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-3 payment. These are:

- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the complaint;

- the act or default of a customer other than the company made it not feasible to send a response within the relevant period;
- the complaint was not sent through complaint channels published by the company;
- the complaint was frivolous or vexatious;

The company should be able to demonstrate and prove above stated circumstances.

### **2.2.2. GS-4: Customer’s complaint must be dealt with in 40 days or less**

This is applied to complaints submitted in accordance with the approved Customer Complaint Handling Procedures CCHP (second stage). This includes those complaints required to be responded to within a period of 40 days, following escalation to the Director of Customer Service (or equivalent). The customer must be notified of the complaint escalation according to CCHP.

The time necessary to respond to a complaint in working days between the opening of the complaint and the time of providing a final response should not exceed 40 working days starting from the day following the date of receipt.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-4 payment. These are:

- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the complaint;
- the act or default of a customer other than the company made it not feasible to send a response within the relevant period;
- the complaint was not sent through complaint channels published by the company;
- the complaint was frivolous or vexatious;

The company should be able to demonstrate and prove above stated circumstances.

### **2.2.3. GS-5: A full written explanation must be sent, or a visit must be arranged to investigate, within ten working days of receiving customer notification of a voltage problem to their property**

If a customer reports a problem with the voltage of the electricity to his premises, the company should provide the customer with a written explanation or offer to visit him to investigate within 10 working days.

The time is in working days between the date of the customer notification and the date of providing a written explanation or the date of the visit to the customer’s premises. This time should not exceed 10 working days starting from the day following the date of receipt.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-5 payment. These are:

- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the request;

- the act or default of a customer other than the company made it not feasible to send a written response or to arrange a visit within the relevant period; or
- the notification was not sent through the channels published by the company.

## **2.3. Customer connections**

### **2.3.1. GS-6: Time taken to provide customers with a substantive response to the initial connection application must not exceed 15 days**

This applies following the provision by the customer of all reasonably required information, which may include: details of the required load; authentic land ownership documentation; and sufficient details of the location of the premises; but should not include spurious detail that is not essential to the making of a fixed price connection offer.

For the avoidance of doubt, a “substantive response” means a fixed price quotation, including connection fees, as specified in the approved connection statement. This shall be based on the load details provided by the customer. The fixed price quotation may then be modified following a wiring and load inspection, if necessary.

The time is in working days taken to provide the customer with a substantive response to his or her request for a new connection to the licensee’s distribution network (applicable for new connection application where the premise is ready for electrical connection). This time should not exceed 15 working days starting from the day following the date of receipt.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-6 payment. These are:

- Incomplete applications where the customer has not provided all required documents;  
or
- Complex connections (for connections with 2.5 MW demand or more)

In case of incomplete application, the customer should be intimated with missing elements and gaps and audit trail should be available.

### **2.3.2. GS-7: Time taken to provide the final connection from receipt of customer payment and the completion of any required network extension must not exceed 15 days**

This applies to the time (in working days, starting from the day following the date of payment receipt) taken for the company to connect and energize the customer’s connection, or to enable a certified contractor to energize the customer’s supply.

The customer should make full payment to the Disco, including any payment to be made to an approved contractor.

GS-7 does not apply should, at any time, the licensee's inspection or other examination reveal that the customer's internal electrical installations do not meet Oman Electrical Standards and same to be notified to customers with reasons and justifications.

This includes all works necessary to enable the supply to the customer's premises to be energized, including the calibration of meters and the delivery of a certified meter to the customer, but not works that are the responsibility of the customer or any qualified contractor he has appointed.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-7 payment. These are:

- Incomplete payment by the customer;
- Customer causes or requests any delay; or
- Complex connections (for connections with 2.5 MW demand or more)

## **2.4. Reconnection**

### **2.4.1. GS-8: Time taken to reconnect customers after disconnection for non-payment must not exceed 24 hours from receipt of payment**

This applies to the time in hours starting from receipt of payment after the disconnection. The time should be measured after the customer has made full payment, or partial payment as per the applicable rules and regulations of late payments (where the payment should cover a certain percentage of the dues), or the customer has entered into a payment agreement with the Disco.

In case the customer has made the payment electronically, he must inform the company within one hour of his payment via Disco's call center.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-8 payment. These are:

- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the request of payment under GS-8;
- the act or default of a customer other than the company made it not feasible to reconnect the supply.
- The customer failed to inform the company of electronic payment within one hour of successfully processing the payment and fail to produce payment proof

### **2.4.2. GS-9: Time taken to reconnect a customer after a supply failure must not exceed 24 hours**

If the electricity supply fails during normal weather conditions because of a problem in the distribution system, the company must restore the supply within 24 hours from the supply failure. Applicability of 24 hours shall be based on the timestamp of incident or failure reporting

or information available to the licenses. It can be SCADA or customer intimation or any other means.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-9 payment. These are:

- Major events: designates an event that exceeds reasonable design and or operational limits of the electric power system. Events that exceed the ability of the utility to deal with them in restoration time specified under GS-9 need to be reported to APSR including timeline to reconnect;
- inability to gain access to the relevant premises/ the act or default of a customer other than the company made it not feasible to reconnect the supply; or
- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the request for payment under GS-9.

#### **2.4.3. GS-10: Customers must be notified of a planned outage at least 2 days in advance**

Planned power outages are deliberate decisions made by distribution companies to cut the power supply to residents and businesses to conduct maintenance within the electricity infrastructure.

Distribution companies are required to give customers at least two days' notice of planned power cuts. This can be done through public announcement in media, newspapers, SMS, electronic channels (including Disco's website), letters or any other suitable means as agreed with the customer and the effectiveness of such communication to be ensured. The company should be able to demonstrate and prove the above-stated communications.

There are exceptions to the requirement to make a GS-10 payment. These are:

- Minor planned outages (plan outages for one hour and less) for LT customers and half-hour for HT customers can be considered minor outages and can be exempted from this standard. However; the company should maintain all records related to communication attempts with customers. In case such shutdown or maintenance goes beyond time then it should be considered a failure;
- emergency repairs; or
- the customer informs the company that he does not wish to pursue the request for payment under GS-10.

### **3. Payment to Customer**

#### **3.1. Licensees must credit the customer's account within 10 days in the event of a breach of a guaranteed standard**

This is referred to as the number of days that the company is allowed to make the payment to customers, in case the customer is entitled to a payment under GSoS scheme.

The time necessary to make a payment to the customer in working days between the date of officially confirming the breach of GSoS and stating the amount due to the customer and the time of the confirmed payment processing (credit to electricity account or other payment means as agreed between the company and the customer). This time should not exceed 10 working days starting from the day following the date of customer receipt of Disco's official response (as per the timeframe stipulated in Customer Complaint Handling Procedure).

The exception to the requirement to make payment is where the customer has confirmed to the company that he does not wish to pursue the request of payment.

#### **4. Disputed claims**

Any disputed claims for payment under GSoS scheme should be resolved through the formal Customer Complaints Handling Procedure.

#### **5. Force majeure**

GSoS scheme does not apply to event or effects that can be neither anticipated nor controlled by the service provider and includes both acts of nature (e.g., floods and cyclones) and acts of people (e.g., riots, strikes, and wars). And same to be notified to APSR and from and to Force majeure applicable and reasons for force majeure.

#### **6. HSE**

GSoS scheme does not apply in the event of unsafe working conditions that can cause injury, illness, or death. This includes sources of potential harm or damage to someone or something in the work environment.