



**Office of the People's Counsel
District of Columbia**

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**Elizabeth A. Noël
People's Counsel**

August 27, 2007

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Dorothy Wideman
Commission Secretary
Public Service Commission
of the District of Columbia
1333 H Street, N.W.
Seventh Floor East
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Formal Case No. 977, In the Matter of the Investigation into the Quality of Service of Washington Gas Light Company, District of Columbia Division, in the District of Columbia

Dear Ms. Wideman:

Enclosed for filing in the above-referenced proceeding are an original and three (3) copies of the "Comments of the Office of the People's Counsel on the Commission's Proposed Natural Gas Service Quality Standards."

If there are any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (202) 727-3071.

Sincerely,

Brian O. Edmonds
Assistant People's Counsel

Enclosure

cc: Parties of record

**BEFORE
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of

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**The Investigation into the
Quality of Service of Washington
Gas Light Company, District of
Columbia Division, in the
District of Columbia**

**Formal Case No. 977
(Comments)**

**COMMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE’S COUNSEL ON THE
COMMISSION’S PROPOSED NATURAL GAS QUALITY OF SERVICE STANDARDS**

Pursuant to the Amended Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“Amended NOPR”) published in the *D.C. Register* on June 8, 2007¹, the Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia (“OPC” or “Office”), the statutory representative of District of Columbia ratepayers and consumers², respectfully files its comments on the Natural Gas Quality of Service Standards (“NGQSS”) proposed by the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia’s (“Commission” or “PSC”).

OPC submits the NGQSS is a significant body of regulations that has widespread impact on all D.C. consumers, the Washington Gas Light Company (“Washington Gas” or “Company”) and energy suppliers operating in the District of Columbia. Indeed, it is a mandated obligation for public utility companies, as well as energy and telecommunications service providers, to provide all D.C. consumers with high quality service. The Commission is mandated to ensure that these standards are implemented and enforced. Such standards must be consistent with other rules and regulations designed to otherwise protect and safeguard the public interest, including rules such as codified in the Utility Consumer Bill of Rights (“UCBOR”), amendments to which are also

¹ 54 *D.C. Register* 5613-5631.

being considered by the Commission. Like the UCBOR, the proposed NGQSS are part of the quintessential regulatory construct that provides D.C. consumers with rights and protections and ensures that the Washington Gas and competitive energy service providers provide service meeting reasonable standards as set by this Commission. The regulatory landscape in the District has undergone significant change over the years and consumers have seen service quality decline while rates have risen over the years. In the NOPR, the Commission has proposed a comprehensive set of regulations that cover not only the quality of service provided by Washington Gas but also by competitive energy service providers. The proposed NGQSS will have a long term impact upon D.C. consumers and stakeholders alike.

II. DISCUSSION

The Office commends the Commission for undertaking a vitally important task to ensure District consumers receive quality utility service, consistent with the requirements of D.C. Code §§ 1-204.93, 34-301, 34-401, 34-802, and 34-908. OPC submits that District consumers expect that public utilities and energy suppliers provide services that justify the rates and charges they are paying for such service. The Amended NOPR is a good first step in addressing safety concerns, given the many issues that have risen regarding the safe provision of service and the legislative directive in D.C. Law 15-342, the “Omnibus Utility Amendment Act of 2004” that amended D.C. Code § 34-401(a) by requiring public utilities to notify the Commission and OPC whenever an incident occurs within the District of Columbia that results in the loss of human life, personal injury requiring hospitalization, or service disruption directly or indirectly arising from

² D.C. Code § 34-804.

or connected with its maintenance or operation.

OPC notes the proposed rules address four primary areas, which we have characterized as follows:

- Safety-related
- Reporting requirements
- Performance measures
- Consumer satisfaction

Proposed rules involving these four areas are commingled throughout the Amended NOPR. The Office submits it would be more beneficial for all stakeholders to segregate and clearly identify the rules as falling into one of the primary areas to improve understanding and compliance and to avoid confusion. OPC submits each category should be given appropriate attention. OPC does not want to see the safety-related rules de-emphasized due to commingling with other areas. While rightfully all of the rules are designed to safeguard and protect the public interest, the public health and safety related aspects of the rules are of paramount importance. Indeed, the Office submits the title of the Chapter should be modified as follows: *Natural Gas Safety and Quality of Service Standards. This change would highlight the saliency of the safety issues.*

OPC also notes that there currently exist safety related requirements located in Chapter 23 of Title 15 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations, which includes safety and meter requirements, etc.³ Provisions of the Federal Safety Code have been adopted as requirements for natural gas operators with some limited additions detailed within Chapter 23. Some of those requirements differ from those proposed in the Amended NOPR. Namely, the Federal Safety Code does not

³ 15 D.C.M.R. § 2300 et seq.

contain provisions for emergency response time requirements, no service interruption standards or reporting requirements, and no leak grade or reporting requirements, and no performance requirements. Chapter 23 of Title 15 of the D.C.M.R. already requires that:

- Initial reports are to be reported at the earliest practical time - No specific time requirement.
- Reports made of incidents to the Federal DOT also to be made to the DCPSC Office of Engineering, - Again no time requirement
- Written reports have a \$5,000 value of property damage - Chapter 37 proposes \$50,000
- Written reports are to be submitted within 30 days in Charter 23 - Chapter 37 requires a 5 day written report

The Office recommends the Commission incorporate the incident reporting provisions in 15 D.C.M.R. § 2306 be incorporated in Chapter 37 of title 15 of the D.C.M.R. or appropriate reference be made to these provisions.

Distinction between Rules Applicable to Gas Utilities vs. Electric Utilities

In several areas, OPC observed that the proposed rules appear to have been unduly influenced by electric utility service. This is particularly true with respect to outages. The proposed rules fail to draw the appropriate demarcation between an electric outage and a gas outage. When an electric outage occurs, power is lost. However, restoration and remediation usually occurs at the Substation Feeder or at the “point of contact” when a downed wire or poll is involved. Visits to each individual customer is rarely required. When a natural gas outage occurs, the utility must conduct house-to-house activities, first to turn off service line valves to isolate customer homes and sections of the high pressure piping network. Low pressure piping systems supplying individual homes do not have main line valves, so individual premises must

be isolated and appliances must be verified via meter dial tests prior to service restoration. Then, lines must be purged of potential gas-air mixtures before 100% natural gas may be re-introduced into gas mains and service lines, and before individual relights of premises may be performed. If this is not done, there is a high risk of fire and explosion. Because of this hazard, natural gas systems are designed and operated such that outages are much fewer in number and in numbers of customers affected, and any rules must take that into account.

The investigation of leaks in the Washington Gas distribution system as initiated by OPC in Formal Case No. 1027, prompted the Office to ensure the leak reporting requirements are specifically detailed in the NGQSS, as detailed in OPC's recommendations to proposed section 3702. While safety issues are relevant for all utilities, given the nature of the gas industry infrastructure, they are of critical importance to gas utilities.

The Appropriate Enforcement Mechanism

The NGQSS as proposed in the ANOPR includes no effective sanction or penalty to be imposed on Washington Gas should it fail to meet the standards set by the Commission in this proceeding. Failure to provide the quality of service required by the NGQSS would result in nothing more than the filing of a corrective action plan and, if the goals of that plan remain unmet, the filing of yet another plan. That is true no matter how many standards Washington Gas fails to meet, no matter how frequently it fails to meet the standards, and no matter how large the margin by which it fails.

Improving Washington's Gas' performance will require standards that include monetary penalties for noncompliance so that Washington's Gas' financial interest will be aligned with the

interest of its customers in receiving reliable service. To achieve this alignment, the penalties facing Washington Gas will need to be sufficient to ensure that the Company will focus on its primary business purpose—the safe and reliable delivery of natural gas service to District consumers.

Implementation and Post-adoption Review

In any situation such as this, where existing practices are codified, certain new practices are required, data and information are to be collected and provided, and protocols need to be established to handle all of those things. As a result there will be a number of unintended consequences, twists and turns and decisions needing to be addressed. Despite the best of intentions, problems which arise are often not resolved in a timely fashion because there is no specific established forum to do so, and special petitions are required. Therefore, the Office recommends the Commission establish a timetable specifically for the purpose of revisiting the rules after an implementation period, perhaps one to two years, where progress can be discussed and problems identified and resolved.

OPC agrees with the spirit of the proposed rules, and except as noted, with the areas addressed. OPC has made suggested edits that are redlined and prepared specific comments associated with the individual sections and subsections of the rules, and some general comments which are included in this general comment write-up.

As a general matter, OPC observes that, the proposed rules cover several general categories, which may be considered as:

- Safety-related – rules which specify actions the utility must take when a situation threatening life or property exists or is reported. Examples: Section 3702.6, which specifies

that Type 1 leaks (which pose an immediate hazard) must be promptly repaired, and Section 3703.1, which requires emergency response times of 30 and 45 minutes for business and non-business hour response, respectively.

- Reporting requirements – rules which specify what data the utility is required to collect and report. Example: Section 3701.1, which specifies requirements for outage reporting.
- Performance measures – rules which identify standards to be met by the utility, and which require corrective action if those standards are not met. Example: Section 3704.3, which specifies targets for meeting installation dates for new services.
- Customer satisfaction – rules which address customer perceptions of utility performance. Example: Section 3704.2, which requires an annual customer satisfaction survey.

OPC submits it is important to capture the proposed rules within the proper categories. In particular, safety is of paramount importance, and should not be de-emphasized by inclusion in the same package with customer satisfaction. While the demarcation among the areas is always not a bright line, there are sufficient differences among the topics to segregate them.

OPC notes that many of these rules break new ground for the Commission and Washington Gas, and that there is a substantial amount of development work to be done in implementing the rules. The specific data requirements, report formats and other activities are not fully known at this time. Further, ambiguous language, potential conflicts between data availability and requirements, reporting formats and other parameters inevitably need to be ironed out.

Therefore, OPC recommends that the Commission now set a date for the parties to revisit and evaluate the effectiveness of these rules after a one to two year implementation phase. This is recognized in the proposed rules in at least one instance, i.e., proposed section 3704.16, with respect to frequency of submission of a particular report. OPC respectfully submits that such

action will ensure the development of rules which will be useful and applicable for the long term.

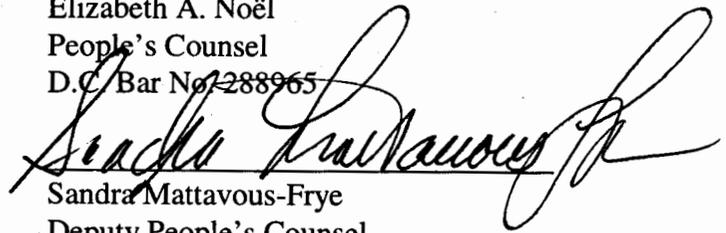
More specific comments and rationale for any recommendations are contained within the proposed section.

CONCLUSION

Wherefore, for the reasons stated herein, OPC requests the Commission adopt the recommendations made herein for the NGQSS.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: August 27, 2007

CHAPTER 37 NATURAL GAS SAFETY AND QUALITY OF SERVICE
STANDARDS

Secs.

- 3700 Purpose and Applicability
- 3701 Reporting Requirements for Service Outages and Gas Incidents
- 3702 Reporting and Repairing Requirements for Gas Leaks and Odor
 Complaints
- 3703 Reporting and Responding Requirements for Gas Emergencies
- 3704 Customer Service Standards, Customer Surveys, Service Provisioning
- 3705 Reliability Standards, Low Pressure water infiltration, Underground
 Damage prevention, Lost Time Accidents OSHA 200 log
- 3706 Billing Error Notification
- 3707 Waiver
- 3799 Definitions

3700 **PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY**

OPC Comment: *OPC recommends the Commission direct Washington Gas and all energy service suppliers develop and follow written policies and procedures that implement the requirements set forth in this chapter.*

- 3700.1 The purpose of this chapter is to establish standards and requirements for ensuring that a natural gas ~~utility~~ company and natural gas service suppliers operating in the District of Columbia meets an adequate level of quality and reliability in the natural gas service provided to District of Columbia customers.

OPC Comment: *The term “gas company” is defined as “a person regulated by the commission that owns or controls the distribution facilities required for the transmission and delivery of natural gas to customers,” D.C. Code § 34-1671.02(11). For consistency, that term should be adopted here.*

- 3700.2 This chapter shall apply to a natural gas company and natural gas service suppliers operating in the District of Columbia, subject to the authority of the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia.

OPC Comment: *Because proposed section 3706 imposes billing error notification requirements on natural gas service providers, the purpose of the chapter should note its applicability to natural gas service suppliers. Again, the term “natural gas supplier” is a defined in D.C. Code § 34-1671.02(12).*

§3701

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICE OUTAGES AND GAS INCIDENTS

3701.1

The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall report all major and non-major natural gas service outages, as well as incidents that result in the loss of human life, personal injury requiring hospitalization, property damage of over \$50,000, incidents that due to their magnitude or coverage by news media could cause public concern, or service disruption directly or indirectly arising from or connected with the gas utility's maintenance or operation, that occur on the natural gas system within the District of Columbia to the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia ("Commission") and to the Office of the People's Counsel of the District of Columbia. Additionally, the natural gas company must include in its operating and maintenance procedures and emergency plan, requirements to conduct metallurgical or laboratory analysis of failed components and provide for complete cooperation with the Commission and OPC in conducting tests to determine root causes and to minimize the possibility of recurrence

3701.2

The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall report major service outage by telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail to the ~~Public Service Commission's~~ Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel, as soon as practicable, but not later than one (1) hour after the ~~utility natural gas company~~ has determined a major service outage has occurred.

OPC Comment:

Notifications- After hours (after 4PM) and on weekends and holidays, the reports should be both to ensure contact is made and the event is known by the regulatory sector. Telephonic notifications will require establishing names and telephone contacts during these emergencies so the Commission and OPC become aware of and react to the needs of the customers and the public. One additional item that should be included as events requiring notification should be events that may cause concern to the public due to their magnitude or coverage by news media.

Notification within one hour – Notifications to the Commission and OPC should be made ASAP but no later than one hour after the event occurs. One hour is being proposed in lieu of 30 minutes for natural gas incidents to allow the utility some time to evaluate what is happening at the scene and provide useful information in its notification. One hour will also allow the Commission to respond as required in a timely manner, to conduct on site investigations, should evidence need to be obtained and to monitor the actions of the utility in making the scene of an emergency safe and in taking actions to restore service.

3701.3 Each telephone or e-mail report rendered by the natural gas utility subsequent to a major service outage shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) The location(s) of the service outage(s);
- (b) The ward(s) where the service outage(s) occurred;
- (c) The total number of customers out of service;
- (d) A preliminary assessment as to the cause(s) of the service outage(s); and
- (e) The estimated repair and/or restoration time.

3701.4 During the course of each major service outage, the ~~utility-natural gas company~~ shall report periodically to the ~~Public Service Commission's~~ Office of Engineering and the Office of the People's Counsel regarding the status of the service outage and the utility's progress in restoration efforts. The frequency of such periodic updates to the Office of Engineering shall be jointly determined by the ~~utility-natural gas company~~ and the Office of Engineering at the start of the service outage and/or as modified during the course of the service outage. The ~~utility-natural gas company~~ shall provide an update to the Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel prior to making any changes to its estimated restoration time.

3701.5 Specific restoration information, including estimated restoration times, shall be provided to the District of Columbia customers by the ~~utility's-natural gas company's~~ customer service representatives and by the ~~utility's-natural gas company's~~ automated voice response unit.

3701.6 The ~~utility-natural gas company~~ shall report non-major service outages by telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail to the ~~Public Service Commission's~~ Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel as soon as practicable but no later than one (1) hour after the utility becomes aware of the incident.

3701.7 Notwithstanding the above:

- (a) The natural gas ~~utility-company~~ shall report a single customer service outage of more than eight (8) hours only upon verification that the service outage was caused by some event on the ~~utility's-natural gas company's~~ side of the customer's meter; and

- (b) No report need be filed if the single customer service outage was caused by some event on the customer's side of the meter.

3701.8 Each telephone or e-mail report concerning a non-major service outage shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) The location(s) of the service outage(s);
- (b) The ward(s) where the service outage(s) occurred;
- (c) The total number of customers out of service;
- (d) A preliminary assessment as to the cause(s) of the service outage(s); and
- (e) The estimated repair and/or restoration time.

3701.9 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall report by telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail all incidents that result in the loss of human life and/or personal injury requiring hospitalization, and/or property damage of \$50,000 or more directly or indirectly arising from or connected with the natural gas ~~utility's company's~~ maintenance or operation, or other gas related incidents which due to their magnitude or coverage by news media could cause public concern, to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel within ~~thirty (30) minutes~~ one (1) hour upon receiving notice of the incident.

3701.10 Each telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail report concerning the loss of human life and/or personal injury, and/or property damage of \$50,000 or more, shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) The location(s) of the incident(s);
- (b) The ward(s) where the incident(s) occurred;
- (c) The total number of customers and/or persons affected;
- (d) A preliminary assessment as to the cause(s) of the incident(s);
- (e) Identify the steps the gas utility is taking to control the emergency; and
- (f) The steps the natural gas company will take to provide assistance to consumers.

OPC Comment: *Regarding reporting of information contained in proposed §3701.10, in initial and follow-up notices, such information should also identify the steps Washington Gas is taking to control the emergency. Additional requirements need to be added to ensure Washington Gas' emergency procedures address the need to conduct metallurgical or laboratory analysis of failed components and to ensure complete cooperation with Commission and OPC in identifying and conducting tests to determine root causes and to minimize the possibility of recurrence.*

3701.11 Written reports concerning all non-major service outages shall be submitted by the natural gas utility to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel within five (5) days of the event occurrence.

3701.12 Each written report concerning non-major service outages shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information as applicable to the given incident:

- (a) A description of the service outage(s) and information as to the cause of the outage(s);
- (b) The location(s) of the service outage(s);
- (c) The ward(s) where the service outage(s) occurred;
- (d) The exact time of the service outage(s) occurrence;
- (e) The actual repair and restoration times of the service outage(s);
- (f) The duration of the service outage(s) in hours and minutes; and,
- (g) The total number of customers affected by the service outage(s).

3701.13 The natural gas utility ~~company~~ shall file a quarterly written report on all non-major service outages with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission~~ and the Office of the People's Counsel.

3701.14 The natural gas utility shall file a written report concerning all major service outages with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission~~ and the Office of the People's Counsel within three (3) weeks following the end of a major service outage.

3701.15

Each written report concerning a major service outage shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) The dates and times when the major service outage began and ended;
- (b) The dates and times when the restoration effort began and ended;
- (c) The date and time when the maximum number of customers were experiencing a sustained interruption and the total number of customers affected at that time (both on a system-wide basis and for the District of Columbia only);
- (d) The total number of customers that experienced a sustained interruption given in one hour intervals throughout the major service outage (both on a system-wide basis and for the District of Columbia only);
- (e) The total number of customer interruption durations (converted into hours) during the major service outage (both on a system-wide basis and for the District of Columbia only);
- (f) Any information concerning requests made for outside assistance, including the organization(s) to which such requests were made, the date and time of the requests, and the resources requested;
- (g) Any information concerning outside assistance received, including the organization(s) that provided personnel, the date(s) and time(s) of personnel arrivals and departures, all crew personnel shall be certified with operator qualification status by type of work that can be assigned and performed, the number of and types of vehicles provided, the total number of personnel received, the total number of personnel assigned to transmission system restoration service crews, the total number of personnel assigned to distribution system restoration crews, the total number of personnel assigned to rights of way clearing crews, the total number of personnel assigned to pressure regulation and measurement crews, the total number of personnel assigned to drip pumping crews, and the total number of personnel assigned to service utilization crews;
- (h) Any information concerning the ~~utility's~~ natural gas company's own personnel and resources used in restoration efforts, including the total number and types of vehicles used, the total number of ~~utility~~ natural gas company personnel involved in the restoration effort, the number of personnel assigned to transmission system restoration service crews, the

total number of personnel assigned to distribution system restoration crews, the total number of personnel assigned to damage assessment crews, the total number of personnel assigned to rights of way clearing crews, the total number of personnel assigned to pressure regulation and measurement crews, the total number of personnel assigned to drip pumping crews, and the total number of personnel assigned to service utilization crews;

- (i) Any information concerning customer communications, including the hourly call volumes (specifically identifying the total number of customer calls received and the total number of calls answered by the ~~utility~~-natural gas company during each hour of the service outage), the hourly staffing numbers (specifically identifying the total number of customer service representatives logged into the call center and supporting phone systems actively taking or waiting to take customer calls), and the telephone service factor provided on an hourly basis during the entire duration of the service outage (specifically identifying the percentage of answered calls that were answered within a 60-second timeframe);
- (j) The total number of customers interrupted and the customer interruption durations (converted into hours) caused by each of the following: water in the main, poor pressure, over and under pressure conditions, frozen meters, pressure regulator malfunctions, lightning damage, ice or snow near pressure regulator vents, and any other major causes (both on a system-wide basis and for the District of Columbia only);
- (k) The total number of each of the following occurring as part of the emergency restoration efforts: the footage of main replaced, number of regulators and meters replaced, the number of transmission and distribution regulator station equipment replaced, relief valve replacements, service piping replacements, the number of mechanical couplings replaced, additional excess flow valves installed on services, and other appurtenances or issued for replacement (both on a system-wide basis and for the District of Columbia only);
- (l) Any issues concerning the availability of materials that affected restoration progress and a description of the emergency measures taken to resolve such issues;
- (m) A self-assessment of the ~~utility's~~-natural gas company's restoration efforts in the District of Columbia;

- (n) The total number of customers, and percent of all customers, restored given in one hour intervals throughout the major service outage restoration effort (both on a system-wide basis and for the District of Columbia only); and
- (o) An analysis, based upon the availability of the data and all other surrounding circumstances, of the ~~utility's~~ natural gas company's performance in its current restoration efforts as compared to its past restoration efforts, taking into account all relevant factors, such as the severity of the current major service outage in terms of the percent of customers affected on a system-wide or local basis.

3701.16 Written reports concerning all incidents that result in the loss of human life and/or personal injury requiring hospitalization, and/or property damage of \$50,000 or more directly or indirectly arising from or connected with the gas utility's maintenance or operation, shall be filed with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission~~ and to the Office of the People's Counsel within five (5) days of the event occurrence.

3701.17 Each written report concerning the loss of human life and/or personal injury and/or loss of property in an amount of \$50,000 or more, shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) A description of the incident(s) and information as to the cause of the incident(s);
- (b) The location(s) of the incident(s);
- (c) The ward(s) where the incident(s) occurred;
- (d) The exact time of the incident(s) occurrence;
- (e) The total number of customers and/or persons affected;
- (f) The steps the natural gas utility company took to provide assistance;
- (g) The amount of time it took for assistance to arrive;
- (h) The total dollar amount of damage caused by the incident;
- (i) The results of investigations into the root causes;

(i) ~~The steps the gas utility will undertake to prevent such an occurrence in the future; and~~

(j) The steps the natural gas company will undertake to prevent such an occurrence in the future; and

~~(k)~~ (k) Any other information that maybe requested by the Commission.

OPC Comment:

Written Reports concerning outages and gas incidents are to address a number of identified issues and information §3701.15, .17 – The requirements appear to be more applicable to electric distribution systems, and unless the definition of major outage is changed to a more realistic level of approximately 250 customers, these requirements most likely will never be used. For instance, requirements to report on rights of way clearing crews and transmission system restoration, damage assessment crews, hourly call volumes would all be important for a major electric service outage, but not applicable to a major gas outage, unless the numbers affected soar into the thousands, a situation highly improbable. More likely causes of major outages to natural gas systems such as excavation damage, leaks on mains, leaks on mechanical couplings, and operator (Washington Gas employee) error are not listed and need to be specifically included within this section. Additionally, the rules should add mechanical couplings to the examples of components that may be involved with emergency restoration efforts under section (k).

§3702

REPORTING AND REPAIRING REQUIREMENTS FOR GAS LEAKS AND ODOR COMPLAINTS

3702.1

The natural gas utility shall document the receipt and handling of each report of a gas leak or odor complaint whether received from its personnel or the public.

The gas utility shall investigate leak areas and document the spread of hazardous gas migration patterns to include at a minimum readings within five feet of the front wall, at the outside front wall of habitable structures, at the inside front wall, at available street openings such as sewer manholes, electric and telephone vaults, catch basins, street and traffic light structures, at the curb line and at the perimeter of gas migration patterns.

A gas leak record, identified by number, shall be used to depict the entire history of a leak from the time of discovery through the follow-up inspection. The record shall contain information as to the nature of the repair and follow-up

inspection results.

Leak classifications shall be made only by individuals who possess training, experience, and knowledge in the field of leak classification and investigation, including extensive association with actual leakage work. The judgment of the aforementioned individuals, based upon all pertinent information and a complete leakage investigation at the scene, will form the basis for the classification. Leaks shall only be classified or reclassified by a responsible and experienced individual whose name shall appear on the record.

The gas leak record shall contain an adequate number of readings from the sample points tested during the leakage investigation to depict the extent of hazardous gas migration, expressed in percent gas-in-air or percent LEL found at the time of classification, reclassification if applicable, surveillance investigations, during leak repair activities, after completion of repairs, and at any follow-up inspections.

The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall report by telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail all natural gas leaks and customer reported leaks due to odor complaints to the ~~Public Service Commission's~~ Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's ~~Council~~Counsel. Each gas leak shall be categorized as Grade 1, 2, or 3. All leaks shall be classified with the following criteria:

- (a) A Grade 1 leak is one that, due to its location and/or relative magnitude, constitutes a potentially hazardous condition to the public or buildings. A Grade 1 leak requires an immediate effort to protect life and property. Continuous action shall be thereafter taken until the condition is no longer hazardous. Completion of repairs shall be scheduled on a regular day-after-day basis, or the condition kept under daily surveillance until the source of the leak has been corrected.

Grade 1 leaks include, but are not limited to:

- Damage by contractors or outside sources resulting in leakage;
- Any indication on a combustible gas indicator (CGI) of natural gas entering buildings or tunnels;
- Any reading on a CGI within five feet of a building wall;
- Any reading of one percent or greater gas-in-air on a CGI within manholes, vaults or catch basins (sampling will be conducted with the structure in its normal condition as nearly as physically possible); or
- Any leak which, in the judgment of the operating personnel at the scene, is regarded as potentially hazardous.

Grade 1: Leaks posing an immediate hazard and are required or controlled

~~through immediate and continuous action.~~

- (b) A Grade 2 leak is one which does not pose an immediate hazard to the public or buildings but requires repair on a scheduled basis. A Grade 2 leak does not present an immediate hazardous condition to the public or buildings, but is of a nature requiring scheduled repair.

Grade 2 leaks shall be repaired within a period not to exceed 6 months.

Grade 2 leaks shall be maintained under surveillance with a frequency not to exceed one month.

Grade 2 leaks include, but are not limited to:

- Any leak which, under frozen or other adverse soil conditions, would likely migrate to the outside wall of a building.
- Any reading of 40% LEL, or greater, under a sidewalk in a wall-to-wall paved area that does not qualify as a Grade 1 leak.
- Any reading of 100% LEL, or greater, under a street in a wall-to-wall paved area that has significant gas migration and does not qualify as a Grade 1 leak.
- Any reading less than one percent gas-in-air on a CGI in small substructures (other than gas-associated substructures) from which gas would likely migrate creating a probable future hazard.
- Any reading less than one percent gas-in-air on a CGI in small substructures (other than gas-associated substructures) from which gas would likely migrate creating a probable future hazard.
- Any reading between 20% LEL and 80% LEL in a confined space (manhole vaults or catch basins; Sampling is to be conducted with the structure in its normal condition as nearly as is physically possible).
- Any reading on a pipeline operating at 20 percent of Specified Maximum Yield Strength or greater within the District of Columbia, which does not qualify as a Grade 1 leak.
- Any reading of 80% LEL, or greater, in gas associated substructures.

~~Grade 2: Leaks which do not pose an immediate hazard and are repaired on a scheduled basis. This allows use of the most efficient methods, allows for coordination with customer's schedules, and minimizes traffic disruption and associated safety concerns; and~~

- (c) A Grade 3 leak hazard is determined by investigation as being non-hazardous at the time of detection and can be reasonably expected to remain non-hazardous.

The natural gas company must reevaluate Grade 3 leak hazards during the next scheduled annual survey, or within 12 months of the date reported, whichever occurs first, until the leak is re-graded or no longer results in a reading.

Each leak hazard repaired by the natural gas company must have the leak area re-checked for remaining gas readings after backfill of repair and vent excavations, and be rechecked 20 days (20 day recheck) following completion of repairs to verify the leak area is clear of all hazardous gas leakage.

~~Grade 3: Other leaks which are considered to be non-hazardous at the time of detection and are monitored.~~

3702.2 All leaks that are categorized as Grade 1 or customer reported leaks due to odor complaint, shall be reported to the ~~Public Service Commission's~~ Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel as soon as practicable, but no later than one (1) hour after receiving the odor complaint and/or the utility has determined that a Grade 1 leak has occurred on the ~~utility's natural gas distribution~~ gas system.

3702.3 Each telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail report of a Grade 1 leak or a leak due to odor complaint shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) The location of the leak(s);
- (b) The ward(s) where the leakage occurred;
- (c) The total number of customers and/or persons affected;
- (d) A preliminary assessment as to the cause of the leak(s); and
- (e) The estimated time to repair the leak.

3702.4 Written reports for leaks classified as Grade 1, or leaks due to an odor complaint, shall be filed with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission~~ and to the Office of the People's Counsel no more than five (5) days after the discovery of the leak.

3702.5 Each written report concerning Grade 1 leaks or leaks due to odor complaint shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information as applicable:

- (a) Address of leak or odor;

- (b) A description of the type of leak;
- (c) Piping systems involved (Transmission, High Pressure or Low Pressure);
- (d) The Ward(s) where the leak has been identified;
- (e) The exact time of the first leak call or leak detection;
- (f) The cause of the leak, if known; and
- (g) Any action taken to date.

3702.6 All Grade 1 leaks and customer reported odor complaint leaks shall be promptly repaired. The ~~utility-natural gas company~~ shall report periodically to the ~~Public Service Commission's Office of Engineering and OPC~~ regarding the status of and the utility's progress of the leak repair. The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall provide an update to the Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel prior to making any changes to the estimated leak repair time(s).

3702.7 Written reports concerning repairs of Grade 1 leaks and customer reported odor complaint leaks shall be filed with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission~~ and the Office of the People's Counsel within (5) days of the completion of the leak repair.

3702.8 Each written report concerning the repair of Grade 1 leak and customer reported odor complaint leak shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information as applicable to the incident.

- (a) Addresses of leak or odor;
- (b) A description of the type of leak;
- (c) Piping systems involved (Transmission, High Pressure or Low Pressure);
- (d) The ward(s) where the leak occurred;
- (e) The exact time of the first leak call or leak detection;
- (f) The actual repair time; and

(g) The cause(s) of the leak

3702.9 All leaks that are classified as Grade 2 or 3 shall be reported to the ~~Public Service Commission's~~ Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel as soon as practicable, but no later than two days after the ~~utility~~ natural gas company has determined that a Grade 2 or 3 leak has occurred on the utility's gas system. All Grade 2 leaks shall be repaired within six months of their detection. All Grade 3 leaks shall be re-evaluated at least once a year from the date of detection.

3702.10 Written reports for leaks classified as Grade 2 and Grade 3, shall be filed quarterly and annually with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission~~ and to the Office of the People's Counsel.

3702.11 Each quarterly and annual written report concerning Grades 2 and 3 leaks, shall state clearly, at a minimum, the following information as applicable:

- (a) Address of leak or odor;
- (b) A description of the type of leak;
- (c) Piping systems involved (Transmission, High Pressure or Low Pressure);
- (d) The ward(s) where the leak was identified;
- (e) The schedule and the status of repair of all Grade 2 leaks consistent with the standard provided in Section 3702.9; and
- (f) The status of re-evaluation and repair schedule, if applicable, of Grade 3 leaks, consistent with Section 3702.9.

OPC Comments:

Establishing requirements for a natural gas utility to document and handle gas leak and odor complaints is necessary to ensure the utility company addresses the hazards associated with gas leaks in a consistent, comprehensive and systematic manner. The requirements for the utility to periodically report on the status of leaks pending completion of repairs will also help ensure a high level of attention and focus is placed on Washington Gas' leak management activities. It will

provide insight into the number of leaks occurring on Washington Gas' natural gas distribution system, as well as the time and efforts needed to manage the grades of leak hazards until completion of repairs. Additionally, Commission's and OPC's review of periodic leak reports will help determine whether additional attention and resources are needed to improve Washington Gas' leak handling policies and whether specific gas system components are more prone to leaks and failures needing priority replacement.

Once a natural gas leak occurs, it does not go away without a repair. For this reason these proposed requirements to document leak and odor complaints, to classify or grade leak hazard investigations, and monitor a utility's response are important. The investigation of leaks is not an exact science; however, systematic approaches by individuals qualified by training and experience help ensure safe consistent and thorough action. To help ensure a consistent approach in investigating and classifying the hazard level of a leak area, the rules need to clarify, with some specific examples of conditions, that which constitute a Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 leak hazard. In addition, the rules should require Washington Gas to establish written comprehensive procedures, which address the rule requirements.

Washington Gas must investigate a leak area hazard to determine the extent of hazardous gas migration. To assist in determining whether the hazard of a gas leak area is changing over the period during which the repair is conducted, Washington Gas must document the extent of the leak migration pattern. Washington Gas must maintain surveillance of the leak migration pattern with a frequency commensurate with the hazard level or grade of the leak until it completes repairs. Making openings in the street alters leak migration patterns and permits the venting of a natural gas leak. A utility must not reclassify a leak to a lower hazard grade just because it has temporarily altered the leak migration pattern by excavating a vent hole, venting a manhole, or by making a series of bar holes in pavement or the ground. Following leak repairs and backfilling excavations, it takes time for any remaining leak hazard to re-establish a migration pattern and for a utility to detect remaining natural gas leaks. To ensure a natural gas utility operator completely repairs all hazardous leaking components in the leak area, in addition to taking gas readings to check the migration pattern of the leak area immediately following its repairs, the utility must be required to recheck the effectiveness of its repairs later to ensure its leak repairs completely removed the leaking gas hazard. To address these issues, we have included changes to the proposed rules.

To provide adequately for public safety and to help ensure consistency in investigation and classifying the grades of leaks, the rules need to clarify

conditions that determine a Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 leaks hazard. In addition the rules need to specify the time limits required for each leak grade to be repaired, and the intervals by which they must be maintained under surveillance. The following items include conditions identified by various States' safety code leak classification requirements, which they have deemed necessary for gas utility operators of gas systems in conditions similar to that which exists in the District of Columbia.

The importance of having authority requiring complete cooperation on the scene of an emergency is to avoid any chance that a utility will ignore the Commission's representative's requests, especially when it involves having component tested to identify root causes of failures and prevent recurrence incidents.

Requirements for a utility to maintain continuing surveillance of its system for changes such as failures, leakage history, corrosion protection requirements, and other unusual operating and maintenance conditions as well as to identify segments of a pipeline in unsatisfactory condition needing to be phased out are included in the Federal safety code. Details such as the Main Ranking Index are needed to ensure a utility actually carries out these code requirements. As OPC has determined in the investigation before the Commission in Formal Case No. 1027, Washington Gas does not seem to do a satisfactory job in identifying those segments leaking which result in service interruptions, or couplings prone to leakage needing to be phased out of service.

OPC will determine the need to periodically review and evaluate the utility's documentation that the utility maintains to track each leak grade including the need to issue special emergency condition safety orders. The main issues are: tracking the number of types 1 & 2 leaks being experienced on Washington Gas' system, the root causes, what Washington Gas is doing to reduce the root causes, and tracking the time to repair type 1 and 2 leak hazards. Later in these comments OPC is proposing to address these issues in the performance requirements included in § 3705 to require the reporting of data regarding a utility's leaks, especially relating to those resulting from increased receipts of LNG to the District if this is identified as causing the leak. Such documentation should form the basis for review of Washington Gas' safety performance, as well as actions the utility is taking to address those components on its system more prone to leaks and failures.

3703

REPORTING AND RESPONDING REQUIREMENTS FOR GAS EMERGENCIES

| 3703.1

The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall respond (be at the site) to natural gas-related

emergency calls as soon as possible, but within 30 minutes of receiving an emergency call during normal business hours, and within 45 minutes during non-business hours, and on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. The utility must have procedures in place to evaluate emergency calls it receives and prioritize its responses to leak, odor and other emergency calls.

Additionally the natural gas company shall keep track of its response times from the receipt of a gas leak, gas odor or other gas emergency call until the time of arrival of emergency response crews on the scene in 15-minute increments, and submit to the Commission and the Office of the People's Counsel a monthly report of its emergency response times. Explanations shall be provided if these time limits are exceeded.

OPC Comment: An illustrative example of such report is included as an Appendix 1 to OPC's comments.

3703.2 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall report all natural gas-related emergencies to the ~~Public Service Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC.

3703.3 All natural gas-related emergencies, shall be reported by telephone ~~or~~ and e-mail to the ~~Public Service Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC as soon as practicable, but no later than ~~(45) minutes~~ one hour after the utility has determined an emergency has occurred.

OPC Comment: Proposed section 3701.2 requires reports of major service outages to be reported within 1 hour. Both of these reporting time limits should be the same-- one hour.

3704 **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS, CUSTOMER SURVEYS, SERVICE PROVISIONING**

3704.1 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall maintain a customer service (walk-in) office physically located in the District of Columbia.

3704.2 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall annually conduct customer surveys to assess customer satisfaction from its District of Columbia customers. The ~~natural gas utility company~~ shall provide the results of the surveys to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC. The customer satisfaction surveys should be conducted from (1) a statistically representative sample of D.C. residential customers; and (2) customers randomly selected from those customers who have contacted the company's customer

service department within the year in which service is being measured. The representative sample shall be newly drawn from D.C. customers contacting the company's customer service department in the previous year and shall be conducted with a sample of customers who contacted the natural gas ~~utility~~ company by walk-in, telephone or e-mail. The surveys, if conducted internally, shall be pre-approved by the Commission's Office of Engineering regarding the method and customer questions. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall include the results from all available previous years of the survey up to a maximum of ten years.

OPC Comments: *OPC recommends that the survey be reviewed and pre-approved by the Commission regardless of whether the survey is performed internally by Washington Gas or by an outside firm. The concern that Washington Gas may not address all appropriate topics in the survey is relevant whether Washington Gas performs the survey itself or hires an outside firm. Moreover, Washington Gas could hire an outside firm under various arrangements, running the preparing the survey instrument itself and hiring a firm to administer it to hiring a firm to prepare and administer it.*

OPC also recommends that, while the Commission's Office of Engineering will approve the method and the questions, the rules should include the following specific topics, in addition to general questions regarding customer satisfaction:

- *The nature of the contact (e.g., walk-in, telephone, e-mail)*
- *The reason for the contact (e.g., moving, service problem, billing complaint, gas emergency)*
- *How long it took to get the problem resolved*
- *Whether and how the problem was resolved*
- *Whether the problem was resolved on the first contact, and if not, how many subsequent contacts were required*
- *How long it took to get the problem resolved*

Responses to these questions will enable a more specific analysis of Washington Gas' performance beyond a general indication of customer satisfaction.

3704.3

The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall gather data and report statistics regarding the number of service calls met on the same day requested, excluding instances where a customer misses a mutually agreed upon time. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall report the percentage of scheduled service appointments met by the utility on the same day requested. Service appointment data shall be compiled and aggregated monthly. A minimum performance standard of 97% on a quarterly basis will apply. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall provide the results to the

Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *In addition to reporting scheduled service calls met on the day requested, the data should also indicate performance when that date was missed. OPC recommends that, with respect to appointments missed by Washington Gas, the data should indicate the number of days late, e.g. one day, within one week, or greater than one week.*

3704.4 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall gather data on the percentage of meters that are actually read by the company on a monthly basis. Eligible meters include both D.C. residential and commercial accounts. On-cycle meter reads performance standard of 95% on a quarterly basis will apply. The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall provide the results to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *OPC recommends the data be segregated by residential, commercial, and automated meter reading accounts, and that "no access" data also be reported and not included in the number of meters read calculation. OPC also recommends that the number of misreads be identified, broken down by the same categories.*

3704.5 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall perform the customer requested meter testing on a timely basis, but at a minimum shall test 97%, on a quarterly basis, of meters on pre-scheduled test time mutually agreed upon by the ~~utility company~~ and the customer. The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall submit its results to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC on an annual basis.

3704.6 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall answer seventy (70) percent of all customers' phone calls received within thirty (30) seconds and shall maintain records delineating customer phone calls answered by a utility representative or an automated operator system. The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall measure and report on an annual basis to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC and the average customer wait time for being transferred from an automated operator system to a utility representative.

OPC Comment: *OPC submits the thirty (30) second wait time is a reasonable standard, and further recommends that the utility maintain records with respect to answer times exceeding that period (e.g., under 60 seconds, 90 seconds, etc.)*

OPC also notes that while the definition of "Call Answering" defines an "answer" as a person or system ready to render assistance or accept information, the rules be clarified to indicate that hold times during a call be tracked. For example, an automated system could accept basic information from the customer, and the then the customer could be put on hold while waiting to talk to a customer representative.

3704.7 The natural gas ~~utility's company's~~ statistics concerning customer calls answered shall separately record statistics regarding~~exclude~~ calls made during periods of major telecommunication failures, periods of labor disruptions, and periods of major service outage.

3704.8 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall maintain a call abandonment rate below ten (10) percent on a quarterly basis, and report the information to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to ~~the Office of the People's Counsel~~OPC on an annual basis.

3704.9 The natural gas ~~utility's company's~~ call abandonment statistics shall separately record statistics regarding~~exclude~~ calls made during periods of major telecommunication failures, periods of labor disruption and periods of major service outage.

3704.10 If the natural gas ~~utility company~~ fails to meet the standards set forth in Sections 3704.3, 3704.4, 3704.5, 3704.6 or 3704.8, for two consecutive quarters, it shall be required to develop a corrective action plan.

3704.11 The corrective action plan shall describe the cause(s) of the ~~utility's company's~~ non-compliance with Section 3704.3, 3704.4, 3704.5, 3704.6 or 3704.8, describe the corrective measure(s) to be taken to ensure that the standard is met or exceeded in the future, and set a target date for completion of the corrective measure(s).

3704.12 Progress on current corrective action plans shall be included in the ~~utility's company's~~ annual Quality of Service Standard Performance Report ("QSSPR"), filed with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, Public Service Commission and to the Office of the People's Counsel~~OPC by April 30 of each year, beginning with April 30, 2009 report for performance during 2008.

3704.13 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall complete installation of 80%, on a quarterly basis, of new residential service requests within ~~ten (10)~~ five (5) business days of

the start date for the new installation.

3704.14 The start date for a new installation shall be designated as the first business day after all of the following events have taken place:

- (a) The customer's valid billing information is received;
- (b) The site is ready for service (cleared, graded, staked, etc.);
- (c) The service connection fee is paid, if applicable;
- (d) The gas safety inspection is received;
- (e) ~~The~~ Any required security deposit is paid, if applicable;
- (f) All mains and regulating facilities are installed;
- (g) Any required public space excavation is completed;
- (h) Any delays due to weather emergencies do not intervene; and
- (i) All rights-of-way and permits are obtained.

3704.15 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall submit a written report on its performance pursuant to Section 3704.13 every six (6), months. The report shall be submitted to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC, forty-five (45) days following the reporting period, starting with the July-December 2008 reporting period.

OPC Comment: *OPC recommends that further detail be specified with respect to the data in the written report. In particular, the report should include percent complete within 10 days (or other final number in proposed section 3704.14), percent complete within 20 days, percent within in 30 days and beyond 30 days.*

3704.16 After four (4) reports pursuant to Section 3704.15 have been submitted, the frequency of the reporting may be changed by the Commission, provided thirty (30) days' prior notice of the change is given.

3704.17 The reports pursuant to Section 3704.15 shall clearly state the total number of new D.C. residential service installation requests received during the relevant reporting period, and for the new residential installation service requests received, the percentage of new residential service connections that were completed in

accordance with Section 3704.13.

3704.18 If the natural gas ~~utility company~~ fails to meet the standard set in Section 3704.13, in any two consecutive quarters, it shall be required to develop a corrective action plan.

3704.19 The corrective action plan shall describe the cause(s) of the ~~utility's company's~~ non-compliance with Section 3704.13 and 3704.18, describe the corrective measure(s) to be taken to ensure that the standard is met or exceeded in the future, and set a target date for completion of the corrective measure(s).

3704.20 Progress on any current corrective action plans shall be included in the ~~utility's company's~~ annual QSSPR.

3704.21 The natural gas ~~utility company~~ shall report the actual performance obtained during the reporting period in the annual QSSPR of the following year.

3705 **RELIABILITY STANDARDS, LEAKS AND COMPONENT FAILURES
LOW PRESSURE CONDITIONS WATER FILTRATION INFILTRATION,
UNDERGROUND DAMAGE PREVENTION, LOST TIME ACCIDENTS
OSHA 200LOG**

OPC Comment: *With respect to the numbered items below, Item 3 contains some information that has to be gathered by gas operators and required to be reported within the utility's annual distribution report to the Federal DOT. Items 4, 5, and 6 involving damage prevention statistics are suggested as good practices in the Common Ground Alliance report (a nationally recognized Damage Prevention Collaborative) and generally gathered, evaluated and addressed by most utilities.*

One objective of this section should be to establish performance standards. Those performance standards should monitor the utility's performance in the following areas:

1. *Emergency response time performance, percent of time meeting 30 minutes during normal business hours, and 45 minutes at other times.*
2. *Service interruption frequency monitoring (due to water in the main or poor pressure problems, etc).*
3. *Trend in the hazard level of its gas system. Levels of Grade 1, 2, and 3 leaks experienced annually, and backlog of Grade 1 and 2 leaks pending repair at year-end.*

4. Number of main and service lines inaccurately marked, resulting in damages or construction delays.

5. Number of locations which the utility failed to mark as required by damage prevention rules.

6. Number of no calls for mark outs by excavation contractors. This is a measure of the effectiveness of the utility's outreach and education of contractors to prevent damages to its gas lines.

3705.1 The natural gas utility company shall respond to all customer odor complaint calls within ~~35~~ 30 minutes during business hours and 45 minutes during non-business hours and on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays, from the time the call was initially received by the company, ~~of call initiation~~. The natural gas utility company shall provide the results to the Public Service Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel OPC on an annual basis on March 31, beginning on March 31, 2008. Explanations shall be provided if these time limits are exceeded.

OPC Comment: *This proposed section requiring response to customer odor complaints should be eliminated or combined with proposed section 3703.1 and reporting requirements included within proposed section 3703. The rules should not differentiate between reports of leaks, odors and other emergencies for response purposes. Each call of an odor presumably of gas, a gas leak or an emergency requires the utility to respond as if indeed it is an emergency. The public is being encouraged by the utility to report these types of emergency conditions so that the utility may respond accordingly. In proposed section 3703.1 and 3705.1, the times for responses as proposed differ; they should not. Washington Gas should be required to have procedures in place to evaluate emergency calls it receives and prioritize their responses to leak, odor and other emergency calls.*

3705.2 The natural gas company shall establish a main ranking index to determine its main segments (including associated service lines) most in need of improvement or replacement. Factors associated with the main ranking index for making improvement and replacement decisions include, poor leak history, poor cathodic protection or poor gas main condition due to visual observations, poor pressure in the area, interruption of service due to water infiltration, segment affected by city or state public improvement projects, etc. At least once ~~Each~~ each calendar year, the natural gas utility company shall rank and identify areas of piping networks of its natural gas operating system requiring improvements ~~for to eliminate segments most susceptible to leakage, failure, supply interruptions or not meeting its minimum design pressure requirements and volume deliverability.~~ The utility shall ~~and~~ establish a performance ranking by area, on a scale of one to ten, one

being poorest performing segments delivery pressure to customers on peak demand supply days. The natural gas utility company shall provide the results to the Public Service Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *A utility should be segmenting its distribution system in a dynamic manner by main and service line material, by decade of installation, whether it has a protective coating or is cathodically protected or not, by diameter, whether there are components within a segment (generally a city block) such as mechanical couplings, repair sleeves or leaking joints or past breaks or repair clamps, or whether the city block has experienced gas service interruptions is adjacent to low pressure pot drips which have a history of "making water".*

3705.3

Each calendar year, the natural gas utility company shall perform necessary analysis for the issues identified in Section 3705.2, and provide plans for eliminating the ten worst performing segments at least for two lowest ranked due to low pressure or interruption problems shall be eliminated each calendar year. distribution systems and one lowest ranked high pressure distribution system, and take necessary remedial actions to eliminate poor supply pressure or volume issues for the following year. The natural gas utility company shall file the results with the Office of the Commission Secretary Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, Public Service Commission and to the Office of the People's Counsel OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *This section should be included as a safety code requirement. The objectives of this safety issue should be to:*

1. *Ensure the utility has an effective main ranking approach which addresses the risks or hazards due to leaks, failures (such as coupling leaks or main breaks), poor main condition (such as corrosion), water infiltration or other causes of poor pressure such as increased load in the area.*
2. *Ensure the utility re-evaluates the ranking of its main segments on a periodic basis, but at least annually.*
3. *Ensure the utility takes remedial actions on its ten worst segments annually, and includes at least two of its worst poor pressure areas.*

3705.4

The natural gas utility company shall respond to all underground utility locate requests and locate their facilities in accordance with the damage prevention laws established within the District of Columbia and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The utility shall maintain an accurate count of all locate requests, responses to locate requests, number of main and service lines it inaccurately

marked, resulting in damages or construction delays, number of locations which the utility failed to mark as required by damage prevention rules, number of no calls for mark outs by excavation contractors, damages caused by excavators or third party to gas facilities (both above ground and underground), third party responsible for the damage, and the root cause(s) of the damage. An annual report shall be filed with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary~~ Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, ~~Public Service Commission~~ and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC.

3705.5

The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall monitor high volume condensate drips on its low pressure distribution network to minimize service continuity issues. In no case shall a natural gas customer outage due to condensate accumulation be more than ~~05.25%~~ 0.25% of the low pressure customer base during two consecutive winter periods. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall prepare remediation plans within 120 days of such exceedance in interruption, for the approval of the Public Service Commission, and provide a target date for completion of recommended repair to the low pressure piping network. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall file the results with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary~~ Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, ~~Public Service Commission~~ and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *As a practical matter it is not clear how this standard is to be applied. For example: If 5% of the low customer base for two winters means that acceptable performance will allow 5 customers for every 200 customers to experience water intrusion interruptions each year, it appears that the standard is too loose. The proposed standard should be a significant improvement over the utility's current water intrusion interruption performance. OPC recommends the 5% during two consecutive winters be reduced to a maximum of one interruption in 1000 customers over two consecutive winter periods rather than 5%. The 5% would need to be reduced to 0.25%.*

3706 BILLING ERROR NOTIFICATION

3706.1

The natural gas ~~utility~~ company and all natural gas suppliers must inform the Commission's Office of Engineering and the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC when a billing error has affected 100 or more customers or the number of affected customers is equal to or more than two (2) percent of the ~~utility's~~ company's or natural gas provider's customer base. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company and natural gas service providers with a customer base of less than 100 customers shall report errors when two (2) or more customers are affected.

- 3706.2 The natural gas utility and all natural gas service providers shall file an initial billing error notification within one (1) business day of discovering or being notified of the error. After submitting the initial notification, the natural gas utility company and natural gas service providers must submit a follow-up written report within 14 calendar days and a final written report within 60 calendar days
- 3706.3 The initial billing error notification shall be sent via e-mail to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to ~~the Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC.
- 3706.4 The initial billing error notification shall contain the following information:
- (a) Type(s) of billing error(s) found;
 - (b) Date and time the billing error(s) was discovered;
 - (c) How the natural gas utility service provider discovered the error(s); and
 - (d) Approximate number of customers affected.
- 3706.5 The follow-up written report shall contain the following information:
- (a) Type(s) of billing error(s);
 - (b) Date and time of the billing error(s);
 - (c) Number of customers affected;
 - (d) Cause of the error and status of any and all corrective action(s) taken; and
 - (e) Timeline for completing any and all other required corrective action(s), which must include the provision of refunds and/or credits, no later than 60 days after the billing error(s) was discovered, as necessary to correct the billing error(s).
- 3706.6 The final written report shall contain the following information:
- (a) Type of billing error(s);

being poorest performing segments delivery pressure to customers on peak demand supply days. The natural gas utility company shall provide the results to the Public Service Commission's Office of Engineering and to the Office of the People's Counsel OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *A utility should be segmenting its distribution system in a dynamic manner by main and service line material, by decade of installation, whether it has a protective coating or is cathodically protected or not, by diameter, whether there are components within a segment (generally a city block) such as mechanical couplings, repair sleeves or leaking joints or past breaks or repair clamps, or whether the city block has experienced gas service interruptions is adjacent to low pressure pot drips which have a history of "making water".*

3705.3

Each calendar year, the natural gas utility company shall perform necessary analysis for the issues identified in Section 3705.2, and provide plans for eliminating the ten worst performing segments at least for two lowest ranked due to low pressure or interruption problems shall be eliminated each calendar year distribution systems and one lowest ranked high pressure distribution system, and take necessary remedial actions to eliminate poor supply pressure or volume issues for the following year. The natural gas utility company shall file the results with the Office of the Commission Secretary Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, Public Service Commission and to the Office of the People's Counsel OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *This section should be included as a safety code requirement. The objectives of this safety issue should be to:*

1. *Ensure the utility has an effective main ranking approach which addresses the risks or hazards due to leaks, failures (such as coupling leaks or main breaks), poor main condition (such as corrosion), water infiltration or other causes of poor pressure such as increased load in the area.*
2. *Ensure the utility re-evaluates the ranking of its main segments on a periodic basis, but at least annually.*
3. *Ensure the utility takes remedial actions on its ten worst segments annually, and includes at least two of its worst poor pressure areas.*

3705.4

The natural gas utility company shall respond to all underground utility locate requests and locate their facilities in accordance with the damage prevention laws established within the District of Columbia and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The utility shall maintain an accurate count of all locate requests, responses to locate requests, number of main and service lines it inaccurately

marked, resulting in damages or construction delays, number of locations which the utility failed to mark as required by damage prevention rules, number of no calls for mark outs by excavation contractors, damages caused by excavators or third party to gas facilities (both above ground and underground), third party responsible for the damage, and the root cause(s) of the damage. An annual report shall be filed with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary~~ Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, Public Service Commission and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC.

3705.5

The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall monitor high volume condensate drips on its low pressure distribution network to minimize service continuity issues. In no case shall a natural gas customer outage due to condensate accumulation be more than ~~05.25%~~ 0.25% of the low pressure customer base during two consecutive winter periods. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall prepare remediation plans within 120 days of such exceedance in interruption, for the approval of the Public Service Commission, and provide a target date for completion of recommended repair to the low pressure piping network. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company shall file the results with the ~~Office of the Commission Secretary~~ Commission Secretary of the District of Columbia, Public Service Commission and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC on an annual basis.

OPC Comment: *As a practical matter it is not clear how this standard is to be applied. For example: If 5% of the low customer base for two winters means that acceptable performance will allow 5 customers for every 200 customers to experience water intrusion interruptions each year, it appears that the standard is too loose. The proposed standard should be a significant improvement over the utility's current water intrusion interruption performance. OPC recommends the 5% during two consecutive winters be reduced to a maximum of one interruption in 1000 customers over two consecutive winter periods rather than 5%. The 5% would need to be reduced to 0.25%.*

3706 BILLING ERROR NOTIFICATION

3706.1

The natural gas ~~utility~~ company and all natural gas suppliers must inform the Commission's Office of Engineering and the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC when a billing error has affected 100 or more customers or the number of affected customers is equal to or more than two (2) percent of the ~~utility's~~ company's or natural gas provider's customer base. The natural gas ~~utility~~ company and natural gas service providers with a customer base of less than 100 customers shall report errors when two (2) or more customers are affected.

3706.2 The natural gas utility and all natural gas service providers shall file an initial billing error notification within one (1) business day of discovering or being notified of the error. After submitting the initial notification, the natural gas ~~utility~~ company and natural gas service providers must submit a follow-up written report within 14 calendar days and a final written report within 60 calendar days

3706.3 The initial billing error notification shall be sent via e-mail to the Commission's Office of Engineering and to the ~~Office of the People's Counsel~~ OPC.

3706.4 The initial billing error notification shall contain the following information:

- (a) Type(s) of billing error(s) found;
- (b) Date and time the billing error(s) was discovered;
- (c) How the natural gas utility service provider discovered the error(s); and
- (d) Approximate number of customers affected.

3706.5 The follow-up written report shall contain the following information:

- (a) Type(s) of billing error(s);
- (b) Date and time of the billing error(s);
- (c) Number of customers affected;
- (d) Cause of the error and status of any and all corrective action(s) taken; and
- (e) Timeline for completing any and all other required corrective action(s), which must include the provision of refunds and/or credits, no later than 60 days after the billing error(s) was discovered, as necessary to correct the billing error(s).

3706.6 The final written report shall contain the following information:

- (a) Type of billing error(s);

- (b) Date and time of billing error(s);
- (c) Number of customers affected and the dollar amount involved;
- (d) Duration of the billing error(s);
- (e) Corrective action(s) and preventative measure(s) taken; and
- (f) Lessons learned, if any.

3706.7 Upon receipt of the final written report, the Commission shall determine whether any further investigation is necessary, including issuing show cause orders or penalties for failure to adhere to applicable laws or Commission regulations, orders, and directives.

3706.8 No later than 60 days after the date the natural gas company or natural gas supplier discovers or is notified of the billing error(s), it shall notify each affected customer of the following:

- (a) The nature of the error;
- (b) The amount by which the customer's previous bill(s) were inaccurate; and
- (c) The steps the natural gas company or natural gas supplier will take to ensure that the customer receives a full credit or refund no later than the date specified in Section 3706.5(e).

The notice required by this Section may be included as part of the customer's regular billing statement.

3707 WAIVER

3707.1 The Commission may, in its discretion, waive any provisions of Chapter 37 of this title.

3799 DEFINITIONS

3799.1 When used in this chapter, the following terms and phrases shall have the

meaning ascribed:

Abandoned Calls – calls to the natural gas utility company that are terminated by the customer after the customer selects the menu option and is placed in the queue, but before the call is answered by the utility customer representative or any other automated response system.

Barhole - a hole that is made in the soil or pavement for the specific purpose of testing the subsurface atmosphere with a combustible gas indicator for migration of gas or gas leakage.

Call Abandonment Rate – the annual number of calls to the utility’s call center or business office that were abandoned divided by the total number of calls that the company received.

Call Answering – a process whereby natural gas utility company representative, voice response unit, or other automated operator system is ready to render assistance or ready to accept information necessary to process a customer’s call. An acknowledgement that the customer is waiting on the line does not constitute an answer.

Condensate Drips – devices installed on low pressure natural gas distribution system at its lowest elevation to facilitate collection of condensates such as ground water or other liquids infiltrating into the gas piping.

Combustible Gas Indicator (CGI) - a device capable of detecting and measuring gas concentrations (of the gas being transported) in the atmosphere.

Distribution Line – gas pipelines that provide natural gas delivery service to consumers.

Follow-up inspection - an inspection performed after an outside leak repair procedure has been completed in order to determine the effectiveness of the repair. It includes retests of all positive inside leak indications and outside readings from the original leak grade classification.

Gas Emergency – any sudden and unexpected situation where leakage, blowing gas, loss of gas pressure, an overpressure condition, or loss of communications or control systems have or may cause serious injury or damage to life and/or property. Examples of emergencies include fires, explosions, escaping gas, unplanned supply interruptions, bomb threats, releases of hazardous material, vehicle accidents, carbon monoxide poisonings, odorant releases, and natural disasters.

Gas Pipeline Facility - includes a pipeline, a right of way, a building, or equipment used in transporting natural gas or treating natural gas during its transportation.

Gas Related Emergency Call - a telephone call where the caller believes that he or she is confronting special circumstances that might lead to bodily and/or system-related damage if circumstances remain unaddressed. Examples include, but are not limited to, gas detected inside

or near buildings, fire/explosion near or directly involving gas pipeline facility with or without escaping gas, unplanned supply interruption, uncontrolled escape of gas or other conditions that may warrant immediate response.

High Pressure (HP) System – a gas pipeline in which the gas pressure is higher than the pressure provided to the customer. Typically, high pressure pipelines operate between 18 psig and 60 psig.

Interruption Duration – the period of time, truncated or rounded to the nearest minute, during which a sustained interruption occurs.

Incident – an event involving the release or potential release of natural gas that interrupts normal operations or causes a crisis. A reportable incident is an event that involves the release of gas and a death or injury requiring in-patient hospitalization or property damage of at least \$50,000. Incidents include damages or costs in excess of \$50,000, also, in general, event receiving media attention or any event that requires closing a street.

Leakage investigation - a survey conducted for the purpose of determining the extent of potential hazard and classifying the leak grade in accordance with Section 3702.1. It involves the driving or boring of holes at sufficient depth and testing the atmosphere in these holes and other available openings with a properly calibrated combustible gas indicator (CGI) or approved equivalent device.

L.E.L - . the lower explosive limit of the gas being transported, for natural gas transported and distributed to customers in the District of Columbia, this value is 4.5% gas in air.

Low Pressure System – a gas pipeline in which the pressure is substantially the same as the pressure provided to the normal residential customer. Low pressure lines normally operate at 7.8 inches water column.

Major Service Outages – customer interruption occurrences and durations during time periods when 250 or 2% or more (2,5000) of the natural gas utility companies District of Columbia customers are without service and the restoration effort due to this major service outage takes more than twenty-four (24) hours.

Natural Gas - is a gaseous flammable fossil fuel consisting primarily of methane.

Natural Gas Service Provider – a natural gas supplier, including an Aggregator, Broker, or Marketer, who generates or produces natural gas, sells natural gas, or purchases, brokers, arranges, or markets natural gas for sale to customers.

Natural Gas Utility - the company that owns or controls the distribution facilities required for the transmission and delivery of natural gas to customers, provides Sales Service and delivery of distribution service of natural gas and is regulated by the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia.

Non-major service outages – customer service outages caused by the failure of devices such as pressure regulators, underground excavation damage, meter freeze ups, lasting over eight (8) hours, regardless of how many customers are affected; or customer service outages affecting over ~~25-2~~ but less than ~~2,500~~250 customers, regardless of duration.

Outside assistance – resources not routinely used by a natural gas ~~utility~~company for service restoration. Resources transferred among utility operating areas are not considered outside assistance.

PSIG – pounds per square inch gauge.

Reading - any sustained deviation on a properly calibrated combustible gas indicator (CGI) or approved equivalent instrument taken in a sample point expressed in percent LEL (lower explosive limit) or percent gas-in-air.

Regulator Station – a regulator station for controlling the pressure and flow of natural gas serving a distribution system.

Telephone Service Factor – the percentage of calls answered within a specified amount of time. For example, if the service level time is set at thirty (30) seconds and 70 percent of calls are answered in less than 30 seconds, then the telephone service factor is 70.

Transmission Line – pipeline that operates at a pressure greater than 60 psig.

APPENDIX 1

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY REPORTS

Gas Company: _____ Month _____ 19____

Emergency Calls

Weekdays- during business hours Weekdays-after business hours-Sat., Sun., & Hol

Total

Response time *(minutes)

_____ # of Calls % of calls # of Calls % of calls

0-15 _____

16-30 _____

31-45 _____

46-60 _____

More than 60min _____

Total _____

* Total elapsed time for receipt of report to time of arrival

Signature of Corporate Officer

Title

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Formal Case No. 977, In the Matter of the Investigation into the Quality of Service of Washington Gas Light Company, District of Columbia Division, in the District of Columbia

I hereby certify that on this 27th day of August, 2007, a copy of the "Comments of the Office of the People's Counsel on the Commission's Proposed Natural Gas Service Quality Standards" was served on the following parties of record by electronic mail, hand delivery or first class mail, postage prepaid:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian O. Edmonds", with a horizontal line underneath it.

Brian O. Edmonds, Esq.
Assistant People's Counsel