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**Standards of Performance for gas
transporters**

Guidance for reporting

Summary

The Gas Act 1986 (as amended) (“the Gas Act”) provides for the Authority to make regulations for guaranteed standards of performance and to determine separately overall standards of performance for gas transporters. In the light of these provisions, standards of performance for gas transporters were introduced for the first time in April 2002.

Guaranteed standards of performance set service levels that must be met in each individual case and are made with the consent of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Overall standards of performance cover areas where it is considered inappropriate to have individual guarantees, but where customers in general have a right to expect the licensee to deliver pre-determined minimum levels of service. These are determined separately for each gas transporter by the Authority.

Ofgem consulted on the standards of performance during 2001, which included undertaking extensive customer research. Final proposals for Transco’s standards were published in September 2001 and the final proposals for other gas transporters published in December 2001. The Statutory Instrument required to introduce the guaranteed standards and the determinations required to introduce the overall standards were consulted on in January and February 2002 respectively.

This document provides guidance to gas transporters (“GTs”) on the framework for reporting performance to Ofgem. All GTs are required to report performance against the guaranteed standards in the same way. However, given the relative size of Transco compared to the other GTs, Transco’s performance against the overall standards will be measured on an annual basis whereas the other GTs’ performance will be measured over a three-year period. The appendices to this document provide hard copies of the spreadsheets that GTs are required to complete. Electronic versions will be sent to GTs in due course for return to Ofgem at regular intervals. They will also be available on the Ofgem website.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
Background and purpose of this document.....	1
Scope of the current standards	1
Structure of the document.....	2
2. Guaranteed standards of performance	3
Guaranteed standards.....	3
Explanation of the guaranteed standards	7
Generic exemptions.....	12
Arrangements for payment	14
Disputes.....	14
3. Overall standards of performance.....	15
Overall standards	15
Explanation of the overall standards	17
4. Performance reporting	21
Notice of Rights.....	21
Reporting performance to Ofgem.....	22
Reporting against Codes of Practice	23
Contact details.....	24

1. Introduction

Background and purpose of this document

- 1.1 This document is intended to provide guidance on the application of the new guaranteed and overall standards of performance for gas transporters (“GTs”) on a day-to-day basis and on reporting performance against those standards. Separate guidance is to be published for the benefit of electricity distributors and suppliers.
- 1.2 It also gives brief guidance on the interpretation of certain Codes of Practice reporting requirements relating to the provision of services for vulnerable customer groups.
- 1.3 GTs should note that this guidance paper is a ‘live’ document and that amendments may be published from time to time to reflect changes in statutory provisions and/or policy changes.
- 1.4 In the event of any dispute as to the application of the guaranteed standards, the relevant regulations provide a specific dispute resolution procedure.

Scope of the current standards

- 1.5 The Gas Act 1986 (as amended) (“the Gas Act”) provides for the Authority, with the consent of the Secretary for State of Trade and Industry, to make regulations for guaranteed standards of performance for gas transporters. The Gas Act also provides for the Authority to separately determine overall standards of performance.
- 1.6 Guaranteed standards of performance set service levels that must be met in each individual case. If the licensee fails to meet the required level of service, it is required to pay a fixed level of compensation to the affected customer. Overall standards of performance cover areas where it is considered inappropriate to have individual guarantees, but where customers in general have a right to expect the licensee to deliver pre-determined minimum levels of service.
- 1.7 The guaranteed standards of performance are common to all GTs. They were established by the Gas (Standards of Performance) (Amendment) Regulations

2002 (SI no. 741). These amend the Gas (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2002 (SI no. 475), which set out the guaranteed standards of performance for gas suppliers. Both of these documents are available on the HMSO website www.hmso.gov.uk

- 1.8 The overall standards of performance for GTs were determined by the Authority in March 2002 and are available on Ofgem's website www.ofgem.gov.uk. These were separately determined for Transco and the other GTs, which reflects the need for additional standards on Transco as the operator of the national emergency helpline and in dealing with national gas emergencies.
- 1.9 Prior to the introduction of these standards of performance, gas regulation relied on licence conditions, industry agreements and voluntary service undertakings to provide safeguards for customers on standards of service.

Structure of the document

- 1.10 Section 2 of this guidance paper summarises the guaranteed standards of performance that apply to all GTs, including a summary of the exemptions that may be applicable. Section 3 summarises the overall standards of performance. Section 4 details the information that GTs are required to report to Ofgem. It also sets out the information that GTs are required to provide to suppliers. Annexes A and B provide hard copies of the reporting spreadsheets that GTs are required to complete and provide to Ofgem on an ongoing basis.

2. Guaranteed standards of performance

Guaranteed standards

- 2.1 The guaranteed standards of performance set service levels that must be met in each individual case, and took effect from 1 April 2002 for all GTs. Table 1 below summarises the standards, and also shows the specific exemptions and the levels of compensation associated with each. These are the minimum levels of compensation that GTs are required to pay for failure to meet the associated standard. GTs can make additional ex gratia payments where they consider it to be appropriate or make such payments where an exemption applies.
- 2.2 A more detailed explanation of the standards and exemptions follows the tables, including an explanation of the exemptions specific to each standard. Table 2 summarises the generic exemptions applicable to all of the guaranteed standards. However, these summaries and explanations are provided for assistance and do not override the provisions contained in the regulations.

Table 1: Guaranteed standards of performance for gas transporters

No	Standard	Definition	Payment	Specific Exemptions
GS1	Restoring domestic customers' supplies after an unplanned interruption.	GTs should restore domestic customers' supplies within 24 hours following unplanned interruptions on their networks. If a GT fails to achieve this, a fixed compensation payment will be paid to the customer affected. Further compensation will be paid for each additional period of 24 hours until the customer's supply is restored.	£30 Cap per customer of £1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the event originated on another GTs network, caused more than 50,000 customers to be affected or was caused by an act or default of the customer who would otherwise be due payment ◆ If the event was caused by severe weather or other exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the GT and it had taken all reasonable steps to prevent the circumstances from occurring and from causing the interruption ◆ For customers connected to networks other than Transco, 3rd party and water ingress interruptions are excluded¹
GS2	Reinstatement of customers' premises	On completion of GT initiated work to re-lay service pipes on a customer's premises, the premises will be reinstated within 10 working days. If the GT fails to achieve this, a fixed compensation payment will be made. Further compensation will be paid for each additional period of 5 working days until the premises are reinstated.	£50 (domestic) £100 (non-domestic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the work is initiated by the customer ◆ If the customer's own action led to the work being required
GS3	Making and keeping appointments	GTs should arrange a morning or afternoon appointment for customer initiated work or a timed appointment if requested by the customer. A fixed compensation payment will be made where the GTs fails to arrange an appointment or fail to attend without adequate prior notification to the customer.	£20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Each of the generic exemptions provided that the GT gives one day's notice ◆ If the purpose of the visit is responding to information received in respect of a meter dispute or a pre-payment meter ◆ If the circumstances that caused the breach prevented the GT giving a notice

¹ Under special arrangements with Ofgem, third party and water ingress interruptions on Transco's network attract the same levels of compensation as other types of interruption.

GS4	Alternative heating and cooking facilities.	<p>If a priority customer's gas supply is discontinued because of a planned interruption the GT shall provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 4 hours.</p> <p>If the supply to customer's premises or gas fittings at those premises is discontinued because any other event (e.g. a gas emergency or unplanned interruption) where fewer than 250 customers are affected, the GT shall provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 4 hours of it becoming aware that the customer has been affected. Where 250 or more customers are affected, the GT shall provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 8 hours of it becoming aware that the customer has been affected.</p>	£24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the customer already has equivalent alternative heating or cooking facilities
GS5	Notifying customers and making payments owed under the standards	GTs shall write to the relevant customer (or shipper) and make payment within 20 working days. Where a GT fails to achieve this level of service, a fixed compensation payment will be made.	£20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If there is a genuine dispute between the relevant customer and the GT

Table 2: Generic exemptions applicable to the guaranteed standards

Exemption	Description
Customer information	An exemption may be invoked in instances where the customer informs the GT that it does not need to undertake any further action before the time at which any work should have been completed
Customer consent	An exemption may be invoked where the customer agrees that action already undertaken by the GT meets the requirements of the standard.
Incorrect provision of information	In instances where the GT requires information from the customer and the information is sent to the wrong address or provided on the wrong telephone number, the GT may apply an exemption. Equally, in the case of the appointment standard (GS3), the GT may apply an exemption if the customer telephones with the information outside reasonable hours
Not practicable	<p>There may be some instances where the GT takes all reasonable steps to meet the standard but where it was not practicable to comply because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ severe weather conditions; ◆ industrial action by the employees of the GT; ◆ an action or default of someone other than an officer of, or agent of, the relevant GT; ◆ the inability of the GT to obtain access to any premises; ◆ the likelihood that the GT would break the law if it complied; and ◆ other exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the GT <p>In order for these exemptions to apply, the circumstances must be both exceptional and beyond the GT's control</p>
Frivolous information	The GT may invoke an exemption if it was reasonable to regard information provided by the customer as frivolous or vexatious
Offences under the Gas Act	The GT may invoke an exemption if the customer has committed an offence under the Gas Act. This includes tampering with meters, other gas fittings and or service pipes into the customer's premises
Disconnected customers	If a customer's premises have been disconnected by the GT in accordance with Schedule 2B of the Gas Act, the GT may invoke an exemption from performing the actions required under the guaranteed standards

Explanation of the guaranteed standards

GS1 (Regulation 4A²) – Restoring domestic customers' supplies

- 2.3 GTs are required to restore domestic customers' supplies within 24 hours following unplanned interruptions on their network. Where a GT fails to achieve this level of service it is required to pay the customer £30 compensation. GTs are required to pay further compensation of £30 for each additional period of 24 hours until the customer's supply is restored, with the total payment for any particular customer capped at £1000 per incident.
- 2.4 A similar compensation scheme for non-domestic customers connected to Transco's network is set out in Transco's Network Code. Ofgem indicated in its final proposals for guaranteed and overall standards for other GTs³ that such transporters would be encouraged to align their Network Codes with Transco's Network Code.

Exemptions specific to GS1

- 2.5 A GT will be exempt if the event originated on an upstream network owned by another GT, caused more than 50,000 customers to be interrupted or was caused by the customer who would otherwise be due payment. It will also be exempt if the interruption was due to severe weather or other circumstances of an exceptional nature provide that it took all reasonable steps to prevent the circumstances from occurring and causing an interruption.
- 2.6 Third party and water ingress interruptions on Transco's network are covered by special arrangements with Ofgem. Under these arrangements Transco is required to pay equivalent compensation as for other interruptions on its network, subject to a liability cap of £30m per incident and £50m annually in aggregate. Other GTs are currently exempt from paying compensation for third party and water ingress interruptions.

² SI No. 741

³ Ofgem publication 79/01: 'Guaranteed and overall standards for independent Gas Transporters'; Final Proposals; December 2001

GS2 (Regulation 4B⁴) – Reinstatement of customers’ premises

- 2.7 This standard requires GTs to reinstate a customer’s premises within 10 working days following completion of work to re-lay a service pipe and any associated work to a distribution main within or under those premises. It requires GTs to reinstate access to any building on the customer’s premises so that it is fit for purpose and to reinstate other parts of the premises to a reasonable standard having regard to its condition prior to the commencement of the work.
- 2.8 If the GT fails to achieve this level of service it is required to make a payment of £50 to domestic customers and £100 to non-domestic customers. GTs are required to pay further compensation of £50 for domestic customers (or £100 for non-domestic customers) for each subsequent period of 5 working days until the premises are reinstated.

Exemptions specific to GS2

- 2.9 A GT is exempt from making payments under GS2 if the work undertaken relates to a request initiated by the customer, for example a new connection or moving a service pipe to accommodate an extension to the customer’s premises. It is also exempt if the customer’s own action or default led to the work being required.

GS3 (Regulation 5⁵) – Making and keeping appointments

- 2.10 This standard applies when a customer asks a GT to visit their premises to carry out work other than metering. Within a reasonable period the GT must offer a timed appointment. The appointment itself should also be within a reasonable period from when the request was first made and either be:
- ◆ during a specified period up to 1pm (the starting time of this period should be notified to the customer) on a specified day;
 - ◆ during a specified period beginning at or after 12 noon (the boundaries of this period must be notified to the customer) on a specified day; or

⁴ SI No. 741

⁵ SI No. 475 (as amended)

- ◆ during a period not exceeding two hours in length on a specified day (the boundaries of this period must be notified to the customer).
- 2.11 If a customer requests an appointment at a particular time on a particular day, the GT must not unreasonably withhold its agreement to such a request. Although it may choose to do so, it is not obliged to agree to a period of less than two hours duration.
- 2.12 If the GT fails, within a reasonable period, to offer an appointment or fails to keep an appointment, a payment of £20 must be made to the customer. Payments in respect of failures to offer an appointment or failing to keep an appointment should be reported separately.
- 2.13 Given the range of GT's activities it is not generally possible to define what is or is not a "reasonable period". It will be for the GT to assess this on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.14 Any agreed appointment must be kept unless the relevant customer agrees that the service is no longer required (e.g. because an outgoing customer received a similar service to that agreed for an incoming customer). Appointments agreed for days other than "normal working days" must be counted as services and failures must be similarly recorded.
- 2.15 The Notice of Rights (Regulation 10⁶) published by the GT should specify its usual start time for morning appointments and finish time for afternoon appointments. The standard allows the GT to offer an appointment at an agreed, precise time. If the GT offers such an appointment it becomes a guaranteed appointment.
- 2.16 Ofgem considers that an appointment is "kept" only where:
- ◆ an appropriate member of staff arrives at the appointed time or within the prescribed period to undertake the task in question. He must also have reasonable time to complete the task; and
 - ◆ the member of staff has all the equipment, which could reasonably be expected to be needed to complete the relevant task.

Exemptions specific to GS3

- 2.17 Each of the generic exemptions set out in paragraph 2.27 of this guidance paper, and covered under item 4 in that paragraph (i.e. the ‘not practicable’ exemptions) apply, provided that the GT gives the customer at least one day’s notice that it will be unable to attend the appointment. GTs are also exempt if the exceptional circumstances causing the breach prevented it from giving the notice to the customer.
- 2.18 GTs are exempt if the visit is required in relation to meter disputes or pre-payment meters, or if the visit relates to disconnecting the customer’s premises under schedule 2B of the Act.
- 2.19 **GS4 (Regulation 4C⁷) – Alternative heating and cooking facilities**

This standard applies where the transportation of gas to priority gas customer’s premises or to the gas fittings at those premises is discontinued due to a gas emergency, planned or unplanned interruption. Priority gas customers include those who are disabled or chronically sick and those of a pensionable age, and whose identity has been notified to the GT by a supplier

- If the gas supply is discontinued because of a planned interruption the GT is required to provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 4 hours (excluding hours between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.).
- If the gas supply to customer’s premises or gas fittings at those premises is discontinued because of any event (e.g. a gas emergency or unplanned interruption) where fewer than 250 customers are affected, the GT is required to provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 4 hours of it becoming aware that the customer has been affected (excluding hours between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.).
- If the supply to customer’s premises or gas fittings at those premises is discontinued because of any event (e.g. a gas emergency or unplanned interruption) where 250 or more customers are affected the GT shall provide alternative heating and cooking facilities within 8 hours of it becoming

⁶ SI No. 475 (as amended)

⁷ SI No. 741

aware that the customer has been affected (excluding hours between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.).

- 2.20 For the purposes of meeting this standard it is sufficient⁸ for the GT to provide one electric fan heater and one single (electric or bottled gas) cooking ring or reasonable equivalent to the customer's premises. The standard will also be considered as having been met if:
- ◆ the GT makes the equipment available for collection from a place which is reasonably convenient for the customer;
 - ◆ this location was notified to the customer within a reasonable time from when the GT became aware of the interruption; and
 - ◆ it was reasonable for the GT to expect the customer to collect or arrange for collection of the equipment from that place.
- 2.21 Where the GT fails to provide the required level of service, it will be required to pay £24 compensation to the customers affected.
- 2.22 This standard has replaced GTs' obligation under Standard Licence Condition 6 of the GT licence to provide adequate heating and cooking facilities to priority customers following the disconnection of their gas supplies due to safety reasons. It provides greater protection to priority customers, as GTs will also be required to provide these facilities following supply interruptions.

Exemptions specific to GS4

- 2.23 A GT may claim an exemption from this standard if the priority customer already has equivalent alternative heating or cooking facilities (as the case may be) available on their premises.

GS5 (Regulation 7⁹) – Notifying customers and making payments owed under the standards

- 2.24 This standard requires GTs to notify the relevant customer (or shipper) of a failure to meet a standard and make payment to the customer (or shipper) within

⁸ As set out in Regulation 4C(4) of SI No. 741

⁹ SI No. 475 (as amended)

20 working days. If the GT fails to meet this level of service it is required to pay £20 compensation.

- 2.25 In defining this standard Ofgem made an allowance for this being a new obligation on GTs. Whilst we recognise that it may take some time before the arrangements for notifying and paying customers (or the relevant shippers) are fully bedded in, Ofgem would expect GTs to notify and make payments to the relevant customers (or shippers) within 10 working days in the majority of cases¹⁰.

Exemptions specific to GS5

- 2.26 A GT is exempt from this standard where there is a genuine dispute between the relevant customer and the GT.

Generic exemptions¹¹

- 2.27 The exemptions specific to each standard are discussed above. There are also certain general exemptions that apply to all the guaranteed standards, subject to any qualification for a specific standard. These are:
- ◆ if the customer informs the GT before the deadline that he does not require the GT to take any action or further action in relation to the matter;
 - ◆ if the customer agrees that an action already undertaken by the GT meets the requirement of the standard. Where the GT has promised to take further action, that action must be taken without undue delay if this exemption is to be invoked;
 - ◆ if, in order to meet the standard, information is required to be given by the customer to the GT, and the customer either sends the information to an address other than the one the GT has indicated or, in the case of the appointment standard, telephones with the information outside reasonable hours as notified by the GT;

¹⁰ See Ofgem publication 03/02: 'Guaranteed standards of performance for gas transporters': January 2002 for further explanation

¹¹ As set out in Regulation 8 of SI No. 475 (as amended)

- ◆ in instances when the GT took all reasonable steps to meet the standard but it was not practicable to comply with its requirements because of:
 - severe weather conditions;
 - industrial action by the employees of the GT;
 - an action or default of someone other than an officer of, or agent of, the relevant GT;
 - the inability of the GT to obtain access to any premises;
 - the likelihood that the GT would break the law if it complied;
 - other exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the GT;

In order for these generic exemptions to apply, the circumstances must be both exceptional and beyond the GT's control. It must also take all such steps as it was reasonable for it to take both to prevent the circumstances from occurring and to prevent them from causing a breach of the relevant standard.

It is important to note that if an exemption is invoked, the GT must be able to demonstrate that the circumstances giving rise to the exemption applied in each relevant case. Whilst a GT may have been prevented from delivering a service in the generality of cases, for example because of severe weather, it needs to be prepared to deliver the required service where the circumstances do not prevent it from doing so.

- ◆ if it was reasonable to regard information provided by the customer as frivolous or vexatious;
- ◆ if the customer has committed an offence under the Gas Act¹². This includes acts such as tampering with meters and damaging any gas fittings or service pipes for the supply of gas to the customer's premises; and

¹² Schedule 2B, Paragraph 10 or 11

- ◆ the GT has disconnected the customer's premises or refused to connect them exercising a power under schedule 2B to the Act
- 2.28 Where the GT claims an exemption from the requirements of a standard, the event should be excluded from the reported performance figures.

Arrangements for payment

- 2.29 Regulation 7 of the Gas (Standards of Performance) Regulations (as amended) and Standard Licence Condition 20 of the GT licence set out the arrangements for payment that GTs may use in ensuring that customers who do not receive the required level of service receive the appropriate sum.
- 2.30 There are similar licence conditions in place on both shippers and suppliers¹³ requiring payments to be passed on to the customer.
- 2.31 There are two ways in which GTs may make payments for failing to meet the requirements of the standards. It may make payments directly to affected customers. However, in many cases, the GT may not have the relevant customers contact details. Therefore in these instances, it is sufficient for GTs to make payments to affected customers via shippers. In undertaking to make payments in this way, GTs must ensure that the shipper is aware that the payment is for onward transmission to the customer via the relevant supplier.

Disputes

- 2.32 GTs should be aware that customers have the right to dispute any decision not to make a payment, including in relation to a claim to apply an exemption, under section 33AB of the Gas Act. It is therefore important that GTs carefully consider whether a particular situation is covered by a standard and only apply exemptions in appropriate cases.

¹³ Standard Licence Condition 15 in Gas Shippers licence and Standard Licence Condition 23 in Gas Suppliers Licence

3. Overall standards of performance

Overall standards

- 3.1 The overall standards of performance cover areas where it is considered inappropriate to have individual guarantees, but where customers in general have a right to expect the licensee to deliver pre-determined minimum levels of service. As with the guaranteed standards, they took effect on 1 April 2002. Table 1 below summarises the standards, and also shows the target level of performance which all GTs¹⁴ are expected to achieve in respect of that standard. A more detailed explanation of the standards follows the table.

¹⁴ OS1 and OS7 apply to Transco only. OS1 is measured on a national basis whereas OS7 is measured both nationally and by Network Management Unit. OS2 to OS6 apply to all GTs. Transco should also measure and report these both nationally and on a Network Management Unit basis.

Table 1: Overall standards of performance for gas transporters

No	Standard	Definition	Target
OS1	Telephone calls (Transco only)	Telephone calls to the national emergency number (which operates 24 hours a day), the dedicated meter enquiry line and meter point reference number helpline (during the hours, which they operate) will be answered by an individual within 30 seconds of the call being connected	90%
OS2	Notification of planned supply interruptions	For planned maintenance or replacement work, which involves interruption of the gas supply, the GT will provide written notification of the need for the interruption at least 5 working days in advance of starting the work. The notice need not specify the date and time of the interruption. Its purpose is that it informs customers that an interruption may be required as a result of planned activities.	95%
OS3	Informing customers of when they are due to be reconnected	For unplanned supply interruptions or gas emergencies which are expected to last over 24 hours the GT or its contractor shall: (a) Where up to 250 customers are affected, notify individual customers that they have been interrupted and the expected programme for reconnection (including the expected date of reconnection) within 12 hours of it having knowledge of the interruption; (b) Where 250 or more customers are affected, provide public announcements (for example, using local public address broadcasts and local radio) throughout the area affected describing the expected programme for reconnection (including the expected date of reconnection) within 12 hours of it having knowledge of the interruption; and (c) Provide a progress report and revised information on the expected date of reconnection after each succeeding period of 24 hours from the original announcement or notification	97% 97% 97%
OS4	Acknowledging correspondence	GTs shall issue a written or verbal response to: (a) Correspondence relating to a provision of a connection to its system within 5 working days of receipt (b) Written complaints relating to its licensable activities within 5 working days of receipt (Where this is not a substantive response it will indicate when a substantive response may be expected)	90% 90%
OS5	Visits	Where a visit is appropriate following receipt of written correspondence or a complaint under standard 4 the GT will: a) Make contact within 2 working days of receipt of the correspondence or complaint; and b) Make the visit within 5 working days (unless the customer agrees a later date) of making an appointment, where the customer needs to be present, and in any other case of making contact	93% 93%
OS6	Substantive response to complaints	The GT shall dispatch a substantive response to any oral or written complaint relating to its licensable activities within 10 working days other than in exceptional circumstances. (This will include an indication of any further work the GT considers to be required, if appropriate)	90%
OS7	Gas emergencies (Transco only)	Where the GT receives a report of a gas escape or other gas emergency, including a significant spillage of carbon monoxide or other hazardous situations, it will attend as quickly as possible within the following timescales: a) All uncontrolled gas escapes or uncontrolled gas emergencies within 1 hour; and b) All controlled gas escapes or other controlled gas emergencies within 2 hours	97% 97%

Explanation of the overall standards

OS1 – Telephone calls

- 3.2 The Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996, (SI 551) require Transco in its role as emergency service provider to operate a single national emergency number for all customers, regardless of whether they are directly connected to Transco's network or to another GTs' network. Therefore, this standard only applies to Transco. It provides this service on a contractual basis to other GTs.
- 3.3 The standard requires all calls to the national emergency number (0800 111 999 which operates 24 hours a day), the dedicated meter enquiry line and meter point reference number helpline (during the hours in which they operate) to be answered by a person within 30 seconds.
- 3.4 This must be achieved in 90 per cent of cases.

OS2 – Notification of planned supply interruptions

- 3.5 This standard requires GTs to provide customers with at least 5 working days written notice of the need for an interruption before the start of planned maintenance or replacement work that requires the interruption of their gas supply.
- 3.6 GTs should meet this standard in 95 per cent of cases.

OS3 – Informing customers when they are due to be reconnected

- 3.7 This standard covers those customers that have been interrupted as a result of an emergency or other unplanned cause where the GT expects that the interruption will continue for more than 24 hours.
- 3.8 In instances where up to 250 customers are affected, the GT is required to inform each customer of the expected restoration programme (including the expected date of reconnection) within 12 hours of it having knowledge of the interruption.
- 3.9 In instances where 250 or more customers are affected, the GT is required to inform its customers, by means of public announcements, of the expected

restoration programme (including the expected date of reconnection) within 12 hours of it having knowledge of the interruption. Such public announcements may be conveyed by means of mobile public address systems, local radio or other equivalent means.

- 3.10 The GT should also provide appropriate updates to the affected customers, including any revisions to the expected restoration date. These updates will be provided upon the expiry of each succeeding period of 24 hours from the original notification or announcement. They may be provided using the national emergency number or other means.
- 3.11 GTs should meet each of the requirements of this standard in 97 per cent of cases.

OS4 – Acknowledging correspondence

- 3.12 This standard requires GTs to provide a telephone response or despatch a written response within 5 working days of receipt of written correspondence relating to connections (where the GT would reasonably expect that the customer would expect a reply).
- 3.13 In addition GTs are required to provide a telephone response or despatch a written response within working 5 days of receipt of any other written complaint relating to its licensed activities (where the GT would reasonably expect that the customer would expect a reply). Where such replies are not substantive, the GT should indicate when a substantive reply might be expected.
- 3.14 GTs are required to meet each of the requirements of this standard in 90 per cent of cases.

OS5 – Visits

- 3.15 This standard covers cases where the GT considers that it is necessary to visit the customer's premises to respond appropriately to written correspondence or a written or oral complaint under OS4.
- 3.16 The standard requires the GT to make initial contact with the customer within two working days of receipt of the correspondence or complaint. The visit

should follow within 5 working days (unless the customer agrees to a later date) of making the appointment with the customer, where the customer needs to be present, or in any other case, of making contact with the customer.

- 3.17 GTs should meet each of the requirements of this standard in 93 per cent of cases.

OS6 – Substantive response to complaints

- 3.18 This standard covers oral or written complaints from customers or submitted on a customer's behalf by another party such as a supplier or energywatch. It requires the GT to despatch a substantive response (other than in exceptional circumstances) within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. The substantive response should indicate any further work that the GT considers to be required to resolve the complaint.

- 3.19 Ofgem would expect exceptional circumstances to be applied on no more than a very small number of occasions each year, and in each case these circumstances should be outside of the GT's control. The GT should also keep supporting information in case Ofgem challenges the application of the exemption at a future date.

- 3.20 GTs should meet this standard in 90 per cent of cases.

OS7 – Gas emergencies

- 3.21 This standard only applies to Transco as it provides the emergency service on as required under the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations referred to in paragraph 3.2 for all customers. It provides this service on a contractual basis in respect of customers on other GT networks. The standard covers cases where customers report gas escapes or other gas emergencies, including significant escapes of carbon monoxide or other hazardous situations, via the national gas emergency number.

- 3.22 Transco as the emergency service provider is required to attend the site of the incident as quickly as possible and in any event:

- (i) within 1 hour of an uncontrolled gas escape or other uncontrolled gas emergencies; or
- (ii) within 2 hours of a controlled gas escapes or other controlled gas emergencies¹⁵.

3.23 Transco is required to meet this standard for both types of escape in 97 per cent of cases.

¹⁵ Controlled gas escapes or other controlled gas emergencies are those escapes or emergencies where the person reporting the incident, after following the advice of the telephone operator, advises the operator that the escape appears to have stopped. All other gas escapes or emergencies are deemed to be uncontrolled.

4. Performance reporting

Notice of Rights

- 4.1 Regulation 10 (1A) and Regulation 11 (1A) of the Gas (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2002 (as amended) (SI 475) require GTs to prepare statements explaining the guaranteed and overall standards of performance respectively. These requirements apply equally to all GTs. The Regulations require GTs to:
- ◆ provide copies of the statements, and any revisions to them, to both Ofgem and energywatch before they are sent to gas suppliers;
 - ◆ send copies at least once every 12 months to each gas supplier that supplies gas to customers connected to the relevant GT's system;
 - ◆ make available a copy of each statement in the current form for inspection by anyone at any of the GT's offices fixed as appropriate under section 46(3) of the Act. If there are no such properties then the statements should be made available at any office open to the public in the normal course of the GT's business; and
 - ◆ send copies in their current form to anyone that requests them.
- 4.2 It is the GT's responsibility to ensure that the Notice of Rights are issued to the suppliers so that the information contained in the notices can be relayed to customers. GTs should set out clearly in the notice in respect of the guaranteed standards the exemptions that are applicable, both those specific to each standard as well as the generic exemptions.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of suppliers to ensure that their customers are fully informed of the GT standards of performance. When forwarding information on to customers on behalf of the relevant GT, a supplier is not compelled to issue copies of the GT's document – the requirement is that they should issue the information on how the standards work and apply. The format of these statements is a matter for suppliers to consider.
- 4.4 Regulation 11 requires the Notice of Rights to explain the overall standards of performance and to set out the level of performance achieved by GTs in respect

of these. Regulation 10 requires GTs to explain the guaranteed standards in the Notice, although it would also be expected that GTs set out performance against these as well as explaining the associated levels of compensation. GTs may provide separate statements for domestic and non-domestic customers if they consider this to be appropriate.

Reporting performance to Ofgem

- 4.5 In addition to providing information to suppliers on the standards of performance, GTs are required to report performance against the standards to Ofgem on a regular basis. Appendices 1 and 3 contain hard copies of the reporting spreadsheets that Transco is required to complete, and appendices 2 and 4 contain hard copies of the reporting spreadsheets that the other GTs are required to complete. Ofgem will send electronic versions of the reporting templates to all GTs in due course and in any case, prior to the reporting date. Copies of the electronic versions will be placed on the Ofgem website. These spreadsheets are similar to those developed for electricity distribution companies.
- 4.6 The guaranteed standards spreadsheet automatically calculates the values of the payments for each standard as well as the value of the total payments made. It also disaggregates the payments made over the reporting period into payments made domestic and non-domestic customers. This is applicable to GS2 and GS3.
- 4.7 The overall standards spreadsheet automatically calculates each GT's performance by dividing the number of occasions on which the service was provided in line with the standard by the total number of occasions on which the service should have been provided. Those overall standards applicable to Transco only are clearly marked as such (i.e. OS1 and OS7).
- 4.8 Transco's performance against the overall standards will be measured on an annual basis whereas other GT's performance will be measured over a three-year period. This makes allowances for the relative size of Transco compared to other GTs where annual fluctuations in service levels may distort performance indicators if performance is measured over a single year. As the customer base

of other GTs increases over time, the basis for measurement may need to be reviewed by Ofgem.

- 4.9 All GTs should report performance against the guaranteed standards of performance on an annual basis.
- 4.10 Transco should report its performance against its overall standards of performance on an annual basis. Its performance against OS1 should only be reported on a national basis. However, its performance against OS2 to OS7 should be reported both nationally and by Network Management Unit. Other GTs should report performance against their overall standards on an annual basis as well as for the three-year period over which their performance will be assessed.
- 4.11 The completed templates should be sent to Ofgem within one month of the end of the reporting period. The relevant submission dates for all GTs are set out in table 1 below.

Table 1

Reporting period	Date for submission of completed templates
2002/03	30 April 2003
2003/04	30 April 2004
2004/05	30 April 2005

Reporting against Codes of Practice

- 4.12 For convenience, the reporting of activity under the GT Codes of Practice have been incorporated into the standards of performance reporting proforma. The following code of practice is applicable to GTs;
- ◆ Standard Licence Condition 18 Provision of Services for Persons who are blind or deaf
- 4.13 Standard Licence Condition 18 requires GTs to prepare and submit to Ofgem for approval a code of practice setting out the special services the GT will make available for domestic customers who are blind, partially sighted, deaf or hearing

impaired. GTs should set out the numbers of customers using minicom or textphone facilities when reporting against this Code of Practice.

Contact details

- 4.14 Electronic copies of the spreadsheets will be sent to all GTs in due course. These should be completed and returned to gary.craig@ofgem.gov.uk electronically, with a hard copy sent to:

Gary Craig
Assistant Manager, Quality of Supply
Ofgem
9 Millbank
London SW1P 3GE

