

MWSS RO-OPP-051-04
POLICY ON WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION
MWSS-Regulatory Office
Customer Service Regulation Area

RATIONALE:

It is the utmost concern of the Concessionaires to provide its customers with a continuous, 24-hour supply of water. If interruptions to the water service do occur, the Concessionaires have an obligation to provide alternative water supplies and to inform the affected customers through notices and tri-media before and during the event.

POLICY:

The Concessionaire should inform the Regulatory Office in writing in advance regarding any planned service interruptions and should properly coordinate with the Regulatory Office regarding any unplanned service interruption.

FOR PLANNED INTERRUPTIONS LESS THAN 24 HOURS

GUIDELINES:

1. The Concessionaire should provide the Regulatory Office and the affected Customer appropriate notices at least 48 hours in advance.
2. In addition to these notices, the concessionaire should also provide the details announcing the areas to be affected by such interruptions through tri-media in a manner which will maximize dissemination. Written announcements should be published 48 hours prior to water interruptions.
3. The Concessionaires will provide the Regulatory Office information on the work being undertaken.
4. To minimize inconvenience to the public, any work to be undertaken by the Concessionaire which will cause service interruption will be allowed to be conducted only at night.

FOR PLANNED INTERRUPTIONS MORE THAN 24 HOURS

GUIDELINES:

1. The Concessionaires should provide the Regulatory Office appropriate notices at least 7 working days (168 hours) in advance.
2. In addition to these notices, the Concessionaire should also provide the details announcing the areas to be affected by such interruption through tri-media in a manner which will maximize dissemination. Written announcements should be published 168 hours prior to the service interruptions.
 - 2.1 To be able to reach the majority of the affected customers, it is vital that a massive information campaign be undertaken, to wit:
 - 2.1.1 **A media plan** should be furnished through RO, which has the following:
 - a) Media advisory should be seen/aired in various television and radio programs scheduled on prime time slots, to ensure that all sectors of the society will be reached.
 - b) Media advisory should be repeatedly aired during weekends, where most of the people are in their respective homes and viewing/listening to their television/radio sets.
 - c) Announcements should be published both in broadsheets and tabloids every day before and during the schedule of service interruptions to ensure that the message reaches all affected customers. Maps indicating the affected areas should also be provided.
3. The Concessionaires should submit to the Regulatory Office all the details of the planned service interruptions, citing the reason/s for the planned interruptions at least 7 working days ahead of the scheduled interruption.
4. If the interruption will take more than 24 hours or it will affect a massive area (e.g. several barangays), it will be considered as a major interruption and a clearance from the Regulatory Office and the Board of Trustees before should be secured first before any interruption should be undertaken. In this regard contingency plans and action plans should also be presented for the Regulatory Office for review. The corresponding lay-out plans/maps should also be presented.
5. The Customer Service Regulation and the Technical Regulation will jointly undertake a thorough evaluation and review of the plans and action to be undertaken, including the provision of alternative water supplies and will subsequently inform the EXECOM and Board of Trustees thereof.
6. The Concessionaires will provide the Regulatory Office information on the progress of the work being undertaken on a day-to-day basis during the entire duration of service interruption. A complete detailed report should also be submitted 2 days after the resumption of water supply, citing how the plans and actions were undertaken and the problems encountered.
7. The Regulatory Office through the Customer Service Regulation and Technical Regulation will validate the reports through field inspection and interviews from the affected residents.

FOR UNPLANNED INTERRUPTIONS

GUIDELINES:

1. The Concessionaire should provide the Regulatory Office, at the soonest possible time, information on the cause/s of sudden service interruptions.
2. If the interruptions will take longer than 24 hours, the Concessionaire should inform the public through tri-media the following information:
 - a) cause of the unplanned interruptions; and
 - b) the approximate number of days it will take for the resumption of water supply
3. For unplanned service interruptions exceeding 24 hours, the Concessionaire should provide alternative water supply.
4. The Concessionaire should provide the Regulatory Office information on the progress of the work being undertaken on a day to day basis during the entire duration of water interruption. A complete detailed report should also be submitted 2 days after the resumption of water supply.
5. The Regulatory Office, through the Customer Service Regulation and Technical Regulation, will validate the report through field inspection and interview from the affected residents.

NOTE:

- Under Article 10.4 of the Concession Agreement *“A failure of the Concessionaire to meet any service obligation which continues for more than 60 days (or 15 days in cases where the failure could adversely affect public health welfare) after written notice thereof from the Regulatory Office to the Concessionaire shall constitute a basis for the Regulatory Office to assess financial penalties against the Concessionaire.”*

In the case of water service interruptions conceivably such will not take more than 60 days and therefore the Regulatory Office is powerless to enforce the policy.

It is therefore strongly recommended that this particular section of the CA be amended, particularly with regard to the length of time that the public health or welfare is adversely affected, subject to the agreement of all parties concerned.

- Under Article 5.4ii of the Concession Agreement, the Concessionaire has an obligation of *“giving notices to Customers at least 48 hours in advance of any planned interruptions in water supply.”*

While it is stipulated in the Concession Agreement that only 48 hours is needed to inform the affected customers of the planned water interruptions, recent past experience attests that the said period was not enough to inform the majority of the affected customers. In fact, both print and broadcast reports highlighted the various complaints of the people on the extended water interruptions.

It is therefore strongly recommended that this particular section of the CA be amended with respect to the length of time for the advance notice to the affected customers, in the interest of public service and customer welfare and to ensure maximum dissemination of information to all affected customers, subject to the agreement of all parties concerned.