

Mission Statement:

The UTC protects consumers by ensuring that utility and transportation services are fairly priced, available, reliable, and safe.



Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

Consumer Protection 1 – Overview of the WUTC's Customer Service Rules and Service Reliability

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Overview of the WUTC's Customer Service Rules



- Utilities obligation to serve
(WAC 480-100-123)
- Notice and information to consumers
(WAC 480-100-103)
- Connection and disconnection
(WAC 480-100-108 and 480-100-128)
- Privacy
(WAC 480-100-153)

Obligation to Serve

WAC 480-100-123



A utility must serve all customers except:

- The customer's wiring or equipment makes providing service unsafe.
- The company or customer cannot secure the necessary rights of way.
- The customer has tampered with or stolen the utility's property.
- The customer has used service through an illegal connection.
- The customer has fraudulently used service.
- The customer is not willing to pay for a line extension.
- The customer is not willing to pay the required deposit.

Notice and Information to Customers WAC 480-100-103



1. A utility must provide:
 - A toll-free telephone number for customers to contact the company.
 - All information necessary to obtain service at its public offices.
2. A utility must provide to a new customer a rights and responsibilities guide that includes:
 - The utility's regular business hours.
 - The utility's mailing address, toll-free number, and 24-hour emergency number.
 - An explanation of the utility's processes regarding deposits, billing, delinquent accounts, disconnection, disputes, and the commission's informal complaint procedures.
3. On request, a utility must provide:
 - A detailed account of actual usage for the previous 12 months.
 - A comparison of the current month's usage with the same month in the prior year.

Connection and Disconnection

WAC 480-100-108 and 480-100-128



Prior to connecting service, a utility may require:

- The customer's name, address, and telephone number.
- Proof of identification.

The utility must provide the due date, if facilities exist.

A utility may disconnect service with notice if:

- The customer fails to pay his/her bill.
- The customer refuses to allow the company access to the premises.

Connection and Disconnection

- Customer Notice to Disconnect



Before disconnecting service, the utility must:

- Provide the customer, by mail or in person, a written disconnection notice, to include:
 - Disconnection date
 - Cause for disconnection
 - Delinquent balance
 - Charges that may be assessed for disconnection or reconnection
 - The utility's name, address, and toll-free number
- Allow the customer at least 8 business days before disconnecting service.
- Provide the customer an additional notice prior to disconnection, by mail, in person, or by telephone contact.
- Disconnect within 10 days of the disconnection date.

Connection and Disconnection

- Disconnect Without Notice



A utility may only disconnect service without notifying the customer if:

- The customer has tampered with or stolen the utility's property.
- The customer has used service through an illegal connection.
- The customer has fraudulently used service.
- The customer has vacated the premises.
- The customer's wiring or equipment makes providing service unsafe.
- The customer fails to keep an agreed-upon payment arrangement.

Connection and Disconnection

- Medical Emergencies



The utility must, if the customer claims a medical emergency:

- Delay disconnect or reinstate service for 5 days.
- Require the customer, within 5 days, to provide a written statement from a qualified medical practitioner that documents the medical emergency.
- Allow the customer, within 5 days, to pay 10% of the delinquent balance and agree to pay the remaining balance within 120 days.

Privacy

WAC 480-100-153



A company may not disclose a customer's name, address, telephone number, or information about the customer's use of service without the customer's written permission.

Electric Service Reliability Rules

WAC 480-100-388/393/398



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- Primary aim: ensure that Commission has good reliability information in order to track trends.
 - Rule requires annual reports to include
 - Baseline statistics
 - Annual statistics for 7 years
 - Discussion of changes in data collection
 - Geographic areas of greatest reliability concern
 - Number of customer complaints about reliability and power quality

Common Reliability Statistics

System Average Interruption Frequency Index

(SAIFI) = average number of sustained interruptions per customer

System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI)

= average sustained outage time per customer

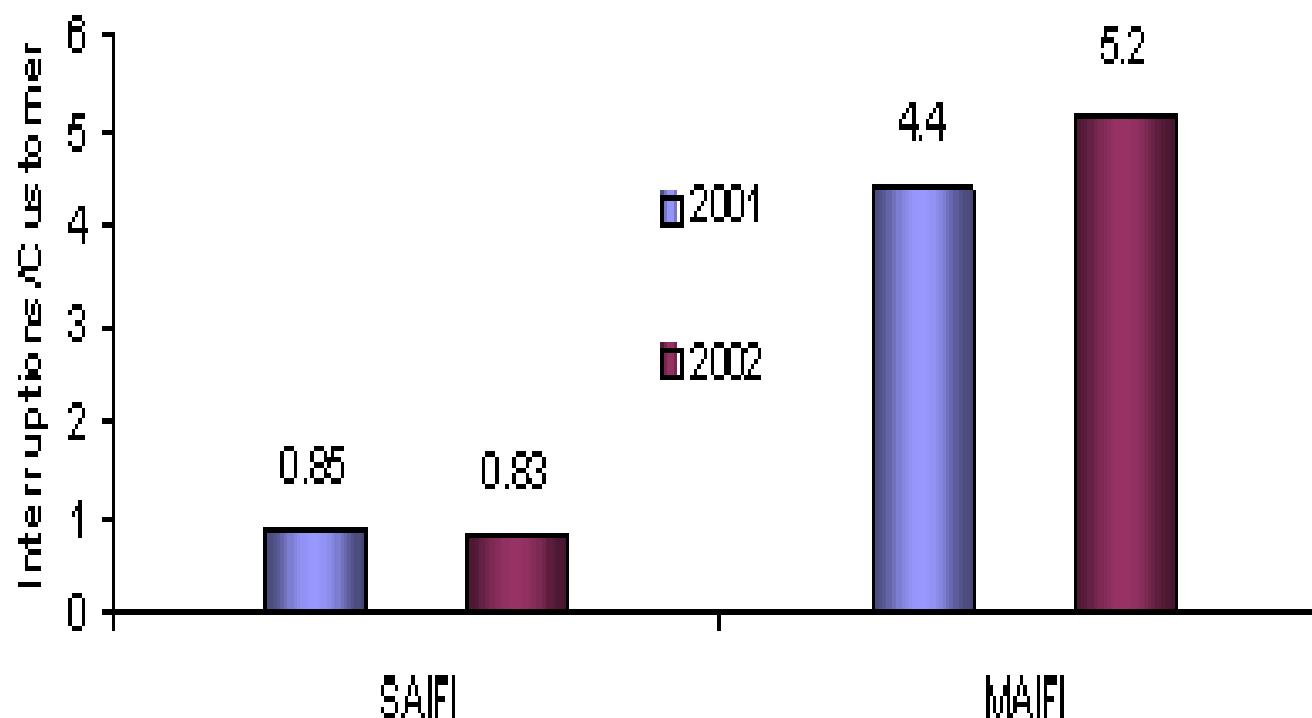
Momentary Average Interruption Frequency Index

(MAIFI) = average number of momentary interruption per customer

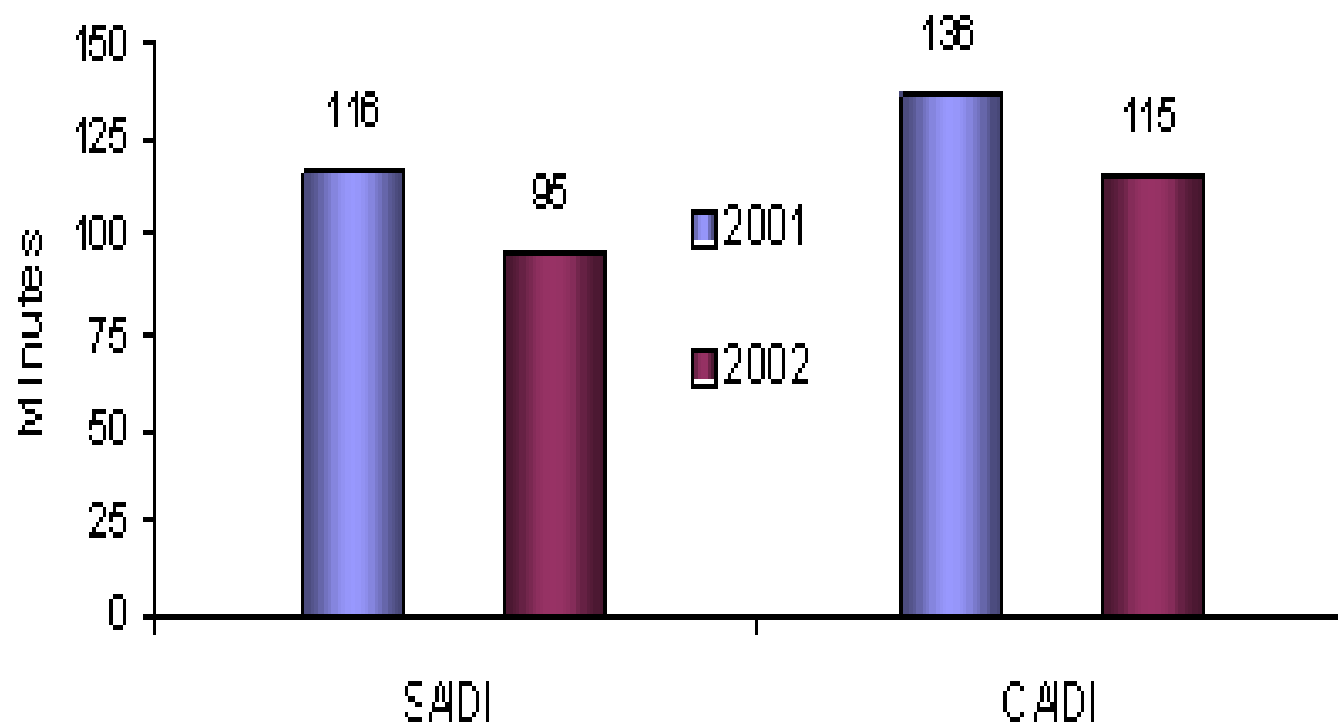
Customer Average Interruption Duration Index

(CAIDI) = average restoration time

Example - Avista

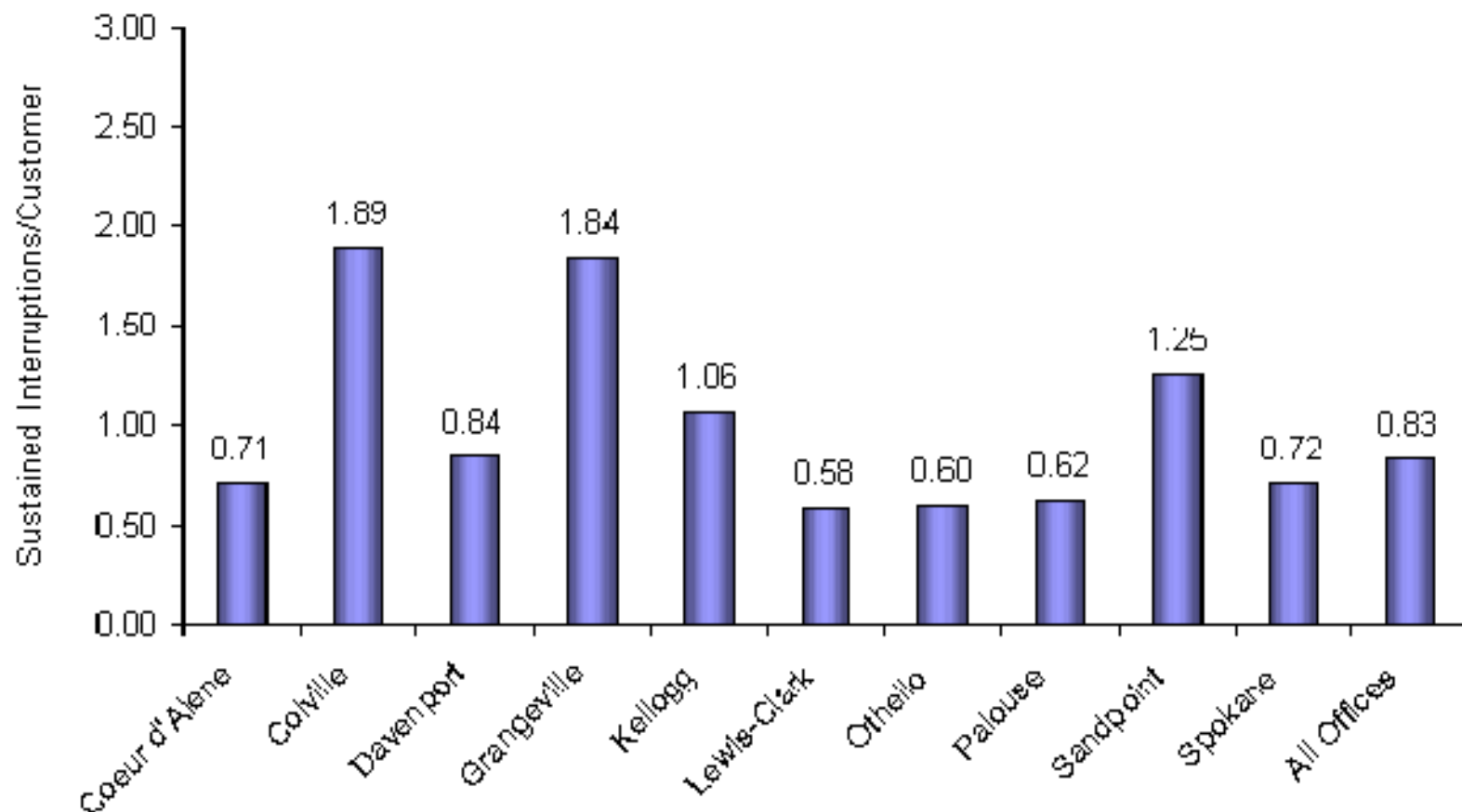


Example - Avista



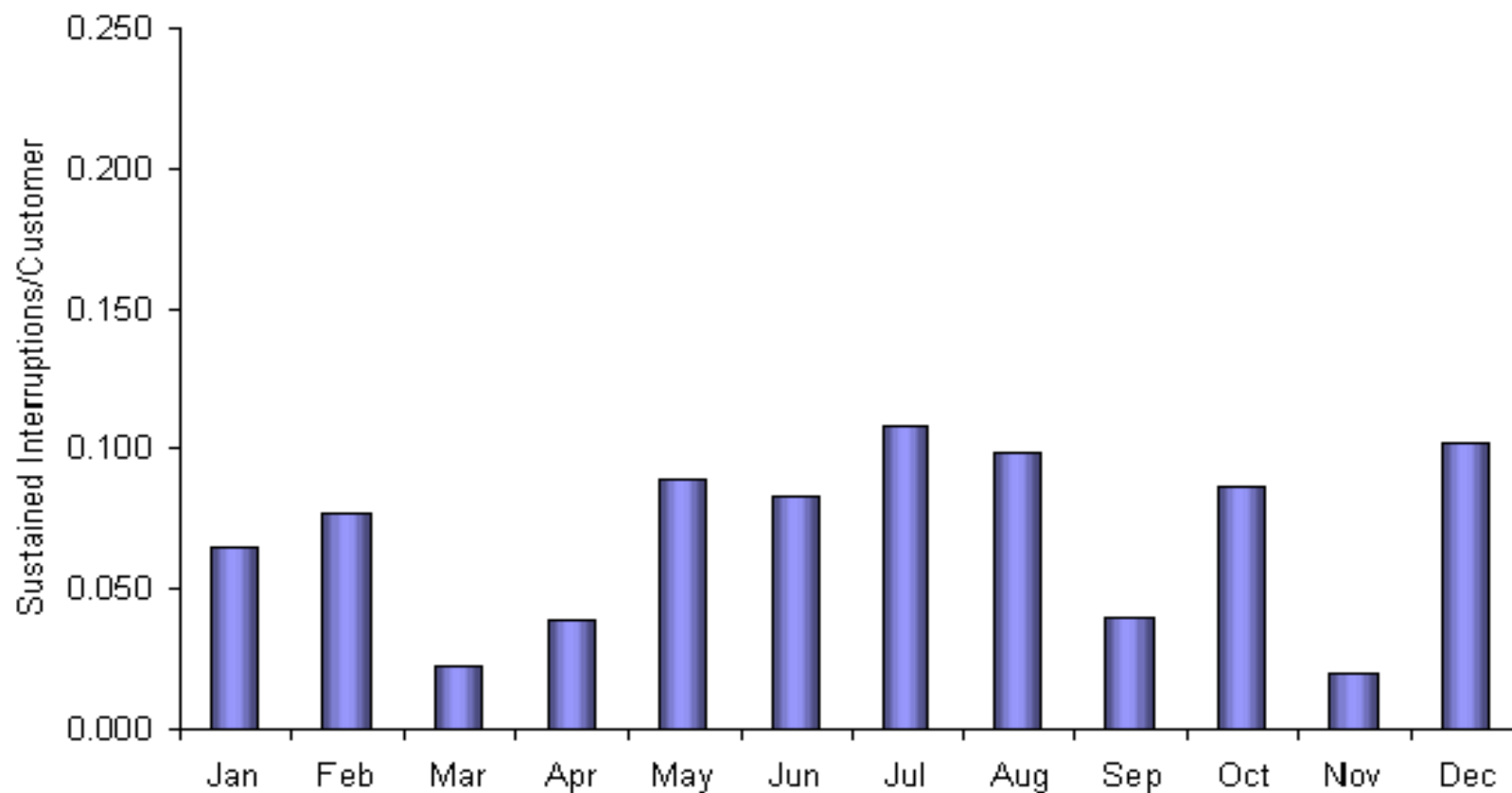
Example

Avista SAIFI by Area



Example

Avista SAIFI by Month



Service Quality Measures

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- Established in merger proceedings to ensure customers will not experience a deterioration in quality of service
 - Comprised of customer guarantees and performance measurements
 - Compensation paid to customers for failing to meet customer guarantees
 - Financial penalties applied for failing to meet benchmark performance measurements

Customer Guarantees

- Restore service as soon as possible
- Appointments will be kept
- Activate power supply promptly
- Provide estimate for new supply within 2 days
- Respond to bill inquiry within 15 days
- Give customer at least 2 days notice for planned interruptions

Companies pay a customer \$50 if fail to meet

Performance Measurements

Example - PSE

| Index | Benchmark |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1) Overall Customer Satisfaction | 90% Satisfied |
| 2) WUTC Complaint Ratio | 0.50 Complaints per 1000 customers |
| 3) SAIDI | 136 Minutes/customer |
| 4) SAIFI | 1.30 Interruptions/customer |
| 5) Call center answer performance | 75% of calls answered by representative w/in 30 seconds |

Performance Measurements

Example – PSE (cont'd)

| Index | Benchmark |
|--|---|
| 6) Customer satisfaction with call center transaction | 90% Satisfied |
| 7) Gas Safety Response Time | Average of 55 minutes for arrival of field technician |
| 8) Customer satisfaction with field service transactions | 90% Satisfied |
| 9) Disconnection Ratio | 0.030 Disconnections/customer |
| 10) Missed appointments | 8% Appointments missed |
| 11) Electric Safety Response Time | Average of 55 minutes for arrival of field technician |

Service Contracts

WAC 480-80-141(1)



A utility may use service contracts when its tariffs require certain assurances from the customer for specific service level such as a commitment to a minimum period of service.

- Utilities must provide standard service contracts in tariffs.
 - Net metering
 - Underground conversion of facilities
 - Line extensions

Net metering agreement

- For customer-generators of fuel cells, hydro, solar, or wind power generators < 25 kW
- Contract establishes conditions about:
 - Delivery of excess energy produced by generator
 - Interconnection, operation, and maintenance of generators according to utility's safety and reliability standards.
 - Inspections of generators by utility.
 - No liability by the utility