



## New York State Public Service Commission

Office of Consumer Services

Three Empire State Plaza

Albany, NY 12223-1350

### *Customer Service Response Index*

Significant Questions/Answers and Issues from staff/utility conferences

The Office of Consumer Services held a series on in-person presentations and telephone conferences with interested utility personnel between June 11 and June 26. The following is a summary of the significant questions and their answers and a list of issues that were raised by utility personnel:

- Q. Where/when will the trial CSRI data be published?  
A. The June data should be published the week of July 7.  
Data will available at: [www.dps.state.ny.us.ocs.html](http://www.dps.state.ny.us.ocs.html). The only way to access this page is to type in into the address line of your web browser. There will be no link from the public portion of the departments web site. Future months' data should be available on the third business day of each month.
- Q. Does the CSM count consultant cases and referrals by the chairman when determining the number of complaints?  
A. Yes, it does, although we may consider changes in the future.  
I. [As a result of our discussion with utility companies we have determined a need to review the method of calculation for this metric. Further information will be available at a later date.](#)
- Q. Are all cases closed in a calendar month counted in the RTM, regardless of what month they were opened?  
A. Yes. The computer will identify all QRS cases closed in the reporting month, regardless of the date the case was initially opened. A formula will determine the differences between the date the case was opened and the date it was closed and then determine the average of all cases for each company.
- Q. How much time does a company get to respond to cases in the RTM?  
A. A company's average turnaround needs to be 14 days or less from the time they receive the case to the time it is closed in order to receive the maximum score for this metric.
- Q. Can you generate a report that shows which cases were included in a given month's RTM?  
A. We believe so. The vendor has been asked to develop such a report.
- Q. What date will be used in calculating the PCM for misdirected cases?  
A. The date the case was delivered to the correct service provider. On June 18 we modified the database to so that anytime a system administrator changes a service provider assignment code the date of the case will be updated by the system. This feature has been tested and appears to be working properly. Service providers are encouraged to verify the date open accordingly. Service providers should immediately notify staff when they receive a case that is not from one of their customers. Notification should be sent by e-mail to: [ocs\\_operations@dps.state.ny.us](mailto:ocs_operations@dps.state.ny.us)

- Q. What date will be used to determine the age of a case that is a rebuttal?
- A. The original date the case was taken by the PSC. A rebuttal results when a service provider provides an incomplete response to a complaint. We will work with companies on a case by case basis to explain rebuttals and assist in helping reduce the need for rebuttals. If you would like to discuss specific rebuttals in an effort to avoid future rebuttals, please send a note to: [ocs\\_operations@dps.state.ny.us](mailto:ocs_operations@dps.state.ny.us). We will schedule a session with you to discuss this matter.
- Q. What if a rebuttal is delayed in the PSC's review process?
- A. This time counts in the PCM. If the service provider's report was complete initially, there would be no penalty against the company since no rebuttal would be needed.
- I. [Staff recognizes that there may be instances where rebuttals were not warranted. We have implemented steps to reduce and eliminate unnecessary rebuttals. We further recognize that for service provider's with a small number of pending cases one aged rebuttal may adversely impact the PCM. We will be monitoring this during the trial reporting period and may find it necessary to make adjustments to the calculation for this metric. Further details will be shared with service providers at a later date.](#)
- Q. How do we handle rebuttals that are the result of an additional issue raised by the customer after the initial complaint to the PSC?
- A. All issues should be brought out during the original customer contact. One of the advantages of the QRS process has been it allows customers to discuss any concerns they have during the first phone conversation. We are unfamiliar with any specific cases but it is likely that as a case ages the customer may experience other problems and bring those to our attention. During the trial reporting period we will entertain requests to review cases which may fall into this scenario.
- Q. Why aren't consultant cases originally handled as QRS?
- A. We'd like to see consultant cases to be classified as QRS originally, but we may need to discuss the matter with the consultant community first. We are also concerned that handling the case as QRS may simply delay an eventual complaint.
- I. [We are considering a modification to the manner in which consultant cases are recorded and will provide further details at a later date.](#)
- Q. Will the CSRI be used in rate cases?
- A. At this point there is no plan to roll this into any existing rate case or rate incentive program.
- Q. Who will receive the CSRI report?
- A. During the trial period, the reports will not be available from any link on the Commission's main web site. The only way to access the info is by accessing the [www.dps.state.ny.us.ocs.html](http://www.dps.state.ny.us.ocs.html) page. Only the service provider community has been provided this web page address. Once real data is available in the fourth quarter, there will most likely be a letter sent to all companies from Catie Black at which time the data will be included in the OCS monthly report which has been accessible to the public since June 2000.

- Q. Will we be informed if we are behind?
- A. We hope you will be able to self-monitor once Internet access to our database is made available to the major service providers. However, we will send reports to those companies that will not have Internet access to our database as needed.
- Q. I think if you don't consider the volume of customer complaints a company receives, you cannot create an appropriate benchmark. Aren't those companies that have fewer cases better by definition?
- A. We will need to look at that issue in more detail. We may choose to group companies of similar size together in the report.
- I. [Staff will review the trial data with special focus on the results grouped by the relative size of each company. We will share our findings at a later date.](#)
- Q. The number of QRS cases can rise or fall because of outside factors, such as activists or when a customer encourages their entire neighborhood to call the PSC and open a QRS case. This could result in a bad month for a company especially if their normal case volume is low.
- A. The same scenario could have occurred prior to QRS. If the QRS cases are handled satisfactorily there is no negative effect on the company.
- I. [We will review any incidents like this that are brought to our attention during the trial period.](#)
- Q. Will there be a way to add an explanation to a QRS case when responding via the Internet?
- A. Yes. When responding to a QRS case via the Internet you will have a text box (80 characters long) available to add a short explanation on your handling of the case. This data will be uploaded to the case so PSC reps will have ready access to it should the customer call back.