

PERFORMANCE OF THE ELECTRICITY DIVISION FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/2005 AND FOCUS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/2006

1.0 Purpose of Report

This report is intended to provide highlights of the performance of the Electricity Division over the 2004/2005 Financial Year and inform on the main focus of the Agency for the 2005/2006 Financial Year.

2.0 Role and Functions of the Electricity Division

Established in 1956, the Electricity Division is responsible for the inspection of electrical installations throughout the island in accordance with the Electric Lighting Law.

The Electricity Division operates four (4) offices across the island to ensure maximum and timely access to customers. The offices are located in Kingston (head office), St. Ann, St. James and Manchester.

2.1 Mission

The Mission of the Electricity Division is:

- (a) to ensure that electrical installations island-wide are safe and are consistent with the Jamaica Standards Regulations; and
- (b) to educate the public on the importance of having its electrical installations inspected and certified and to monitor electrical installation practices with the aim of preventing loss of life and property as a result of electrical accidents.

2.2 Objectives

The main objective of the Division is to ensure the practical safeguarding of persons and property (buildings and their contents) from hazards arising from the use of electricity. The objectives of the Division are accomplished by an orderly system of inspections, tests, and certification of electrical installations, thereby ensuring that the essential provisions considered necessary for safety are satisfied in accordance with the regulations and the Electric Lighting Law. When these criteria are met, certificates of fitness are issued to the supplying authority (Jamaica Public Service Co.) by the Electricity Division, also called the Government Electrical Inspectorate (G.E.I.) attesting

to the safety of the installation and its adherence to the governing standards. The Chief Electrical Inspector is the sole arbiter on all electrical matters on which the regulations are silent.

Only installations for which certification has been issued by the GEI may be connected to the (JPSCo) grid.

2.3 Primary Functions

- (i) to ensure that all electrical installations constructed in Jamaica comply with the Electric Lighting Law and the related regulations so that electrical systems can provide light and power without hazard to life and property;
- (ii) to physically inspect all new installations (industrial, commercial, and domestic) and certify them before they are connected to the JPSCo's grid;
- (iii) to carry out periodic checks of old installations, including transmission and distribution lines and substations, and recommend modifications and improvements as necessary;
- (iv) to inspect and to certify new installations of the JPSCo. electrical system (transmission and distribution) and the Rural Electrification Programme (REP);
- (v) to process, comment on, and approve all electrical designs submitted by consultants, contractors, developers and consumers;
- (vi) to investigate accidents relating to electricity and to prepare reports to improve the safety of installations involved;
- (vii) to provide technical information to consultants, architects, electrical engineers, local and foreign contractors, police and fire officials and the general public;
- (viii) to monitor the performance of all licensed electricians and advise the Board of Examiners accordingly; and
- (ix) to meet with members of technical committees of the Board of Examiners and Bureau of Standards Jamaica, to discuss technical standards, materials, equipment and the preparation of new specifications.

3.0 Achievements for Financial Year 2004/2005

3.1 Main Achievements

On an average twenty four thousand (24,000) inspections are done annually. During the period under review, a total of thirty thousand and four hundred (30,400) applications were received of which twenty-eight thousand and ninety (28,090) or 92.4% of installations were granted certification and one thousand three hundred and ten (1,310) or 7.6% were rejected.

3.2 Approved Budget

A total of \$36.60 M was approved for the Division's budget for the 2004/2005 Financial Year. Of this amount \$21.61 M was for emoluments including travelling and subsistence. The balance of approximately \$14.99M was to cover all other costs including rental of offices at the four (4) locations island-wide.

3.3 Service Fees

The Division earned \$11,491,602 in service fees during the 2004/05 financial year.

4.0 Main Programmes for 2005/2006 Financial Year.

The target is thirty thousand (30,000) inspections for the Financial Year.

The overall aim for the 2005/2006 Financial Year is to continue to create a better public image for the Division, maximize revenue intake, provide quality customer service and generally operate in a more efficient and effective manner. To achieve this, there are a number of programmes which the Division plans to implement over the course of the year. The main ones are as follows:

- Networking two (2) of the four (4) offices of the Division
- Increased inspection and certification of electrical installations
- Approval of electrical designs prior to construction
- Public awareness
- New services
- Staff training

(a) Networking of Offices

The Financial Year 2005/2006 should mark the beginning of a new era for the Electricity Division. The objective is to network the offices of the Division so that a single database

exists to facilitate the submission of requests from any office of the Division, irrespective of the location of the installation. The process will commence with construction of a local area network in the Kingston and Montego Bay offices.

(b) Inspections/Certification of Electrical Installations

The objective of the Division in respect of providing the public with safe electrical installations is to certify at least thirty thousand (30,000) installations over the 2005/2006 Financial Year. This will require procurement of vehicle(s) to access remote locations, cutting edge instruments and judicious deployment of limited resources.

(c) Approval of Designs

The Division has undertaken to approve electrical designs prior to their installation. This means that all designs submitted to the various Parish Councils will now have to be submitted to the Division for approval. This will significantly increase the number of designs submitted to the Division for approval but will reduce the incidence of faults on completed installations. This will be advantageous to the developers as this could reduce cost of correcting faults occurring on finished structures.

(d) Public Awareness

Stimulating public awareness on the safe use of electricity and also the role that the Electricity Division plays in ensuring safe installations will also be high on the Division's agenda for Financial Year 2005/2006. The usual meetings with licensed electricians throughout the island should continue to afford the Division the opportunity to highlight the governing electrical code/law and also to impress upon practising electricians, the importance of adhering to safety measures. The printed and electronic media will continue to be means whereby relevant information in respect of electrical safety will be provided to the general public.

Identification stickers will be placed at main distribution panels of certified electrical installations. This will serve as an indicator that the installations have been checked by the Division and certified safe.

(e) New Service

The Division will be exploring the feasibility of conducting inspection of high risk inner-city residential communities and making the information available to the occupants and neighbouring premises. This is intended to inform occupants of high risk residences and neighbours of potential electrical risk so that timely corrective action can be pursued.

This service is intended to reduce the incidence of electrical fires in depressed communities which can be attributed to faulty electrical wiring. Such faulty wiring not

only exposes the resident to the risk of electrical fires but put neighbours at risk also. It is therefore in the interest of a resident that neighbours have legal electrical connections and proper electrical wiring.

(f) Staff Training

Emphasis will be on the training of staff to increase their general competence. Also, the Division will explore the feasibility of supporting the training of technicians to increase the pool of expertise available in the market. By increase the level of technicians in the market, it is envisaged that more competitive rates will be available to the public.

6.0 Budgets for the Financial Year 2005/2006

The actual expenditure for the 2004/05 financial year is \$35.6 million while the approved budget is \$36.9 M.

Inspection fees have not been increased for approximately 13 years and the fees currently charged are significantly below the cost of providing the service. A review is now being done to bring the fees more in line with the economic cost of providing the service. The Ministry is also exploring the feasibility of removing the Division from the budget and for it to be funded from its service fees charged. This will enable the Division to improve its quality of service to the public.

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