



# **CUSTOMER COMPLAINT TRACKING SOP**

SOP #421

Rev: 0.0

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## SOP VERSION CONTROL

Revision No	Revision Date	Page No(s)	Description	Approved by

## STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I certify that the requirements of this SOP have been communicated to me and that I am trained in its use. A copy of this page will be distributed to the employee training record file.

Name	Date

## APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Prepared by: Arcadis U.S., Inc. Date: 01/31/2018

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

EAM	enterprise asset management
GIS	geographic information system
PPE	personal protective equipment

## 2 KEY PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Administrative / Call Center Staff:
  - Receive calls on technical quality customer concerns related to the distribution system (i.e., complaints associated with water quality, taste, odor, appearance, pressure, main breaks, and disruptions of water service) and record initial call information into the enterprise asset management (EAM) system.
  - Generate work orders for follow up investigation.
- Water Distribution Operator:
  - Investigate and address concerns through operations or field visits.
  - Enter results from any response follow-up or remedial actions taken into the EAM system.
  - Track customer complaints and performance against distribution system levels of service goals (once established).

## 3 SCOPE/PURPOSE

Information from customers on water quality issues, leaks, main breaks, and other observations of the distribution system can be used to manage the system effectively. Implementation of the below procedure is intended to track the distribution system performance against established goals for the number of distribution system technical quality complaints (i.e., complaints associated with water quality, taste, odor, appearance, pressure, main breaks, and disruptions of water service) collected annually. The AWWA Partnership for Safe Water Distribution System Optimization Program (2011) states that: “Benchmarking surveys consistently show the best performing systems have less than 2.5 technical quality complaints per 1,000 customer accounts annually.”

If chronic challenges are identified through the periodic review of collected data, a program should be developed to improve the distribution system performance such as localized flushing, hydraulic monitoring, or additional sampling.

## 4 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Water Distribution staff entering the community to investigate complaints should be aware of their surroundings at all times. Always carry appropriate City of Flint identification or a City

approved contractor identification card. Where possible, customer visits should be conducted in pairs. If analytical samples are required, the following PPE should be used:

- Chemical resistant gloves
- Safety glasses

## 5 PROCEDURE

### Administrative / Call Center Staff Procedure:

1. Upon receipt of a customer complaint phone call, collect the following information:
  - a. Date
  - b. Name and contact information of caller
  - c. Address of observation/complaint
  - d. Nature of the call:
    - i. Water quality complaint: If the customer is calling to report a water quality issue, record the general description from the customer and collect any of the following information, if available:
      1. Temperature (approximate)
      2. Taste
      3. Odor
      4. Appearance
        - a. Color
        - b. Cloudy or milky
        - c. Presence and description of particulate matter
      5. Length of time experiencing the problem
      6. If the problem occurs with hot water, cold water, or both
    - ii. Pressure complaint – too high or too low
    - iii. Leak or main break
      1. Street address nearest to the observed leak or main break
      2. Description of flow
        - a. Quantity
        - b. Color
        - c. Odor
    - iv. Disruption of service
    - v. Other observation

1. Hydrant malfunction or tampering
  2. Vandalism
  3. Other – please describe
- e. Any additional notes or pertinent information from caller
2. If there are known conditions causing the complaint (e.g., main break in the area), convey that information to the caller.
  3. If the caller is reporting a main break or disruption to their water service, call the Water Service Center immediately to inform them of the issue.
  4. Enter the information collected in Step 1 into the EAM and generate a work order for the Water Service Center to follow up with the complaint.

**Water Distribution Staff Procedure:**

1. Upon receipt of a customer complaint work order, designate a staff member to follow-up or investigate the complaint in a timely manner based on the severity of the complaint.  
**Reports of main breaks or disruptions to service must be investigated immediately.**
2. For field visits, use the following procedure:
  - a. Prior to a customer visit, contact the complainant to notify them of anticipated time of arrival, name of personnel, and any identifying features (city identification badge, field truck, etc.).
  - b. Upon arrival to the site, evaluate the surroundings for safety. Only when it is deemed safe, approach the area indicated on the work order.
  - c. Identify all personnel on site to the customer and explain the nature of the investigation or follow-up including:
    - i. Any samples to be collected and analyses to be completed, either on-site, by a laboratory or at the Water Service Center.
    - ii. Known issues in the area that may have contributed to the complaint.
    - iii. Estimated timeframe to resolve the complaint, if available.
  - d. Collect samples and/or photographs as needed for records. Refer to the appropriate SOP for water quality sampling and analysis in the field. Record the results of any field analyses (chlorine, turbidity, etc.).
3. After an investigation has been completed, follow-up with the customer in writing indicating the possible reason for the observation and any corrective measures implemented as a result. If no problem can be determined, then advise the customer that the problem may be an internal plumbing issue.

**Planned and Unplanned Service Interruptions:**

1. In the event of a planned service interruption, notify all impacted parties in writing as far in advance as possible, before the outage. Communication shall include the anticipated time and duration of the outage, as well as any potential outcomes or anticipated water

quality impacts. Where possible, multiple communication methods should be employed (e.g. radio, social media, newspaper).

2. In the event of an unplanned service interruption, approach affected customers only if it is deemed safe to do so based on a field evaluation of the area. As soon as possible, notify the affected customers of the interruption including the anticipated duration and effects to their service.

## 6 DATA RECORDING AND MANAGEMENT

All data recorded from the initial customer complaint call shall be entered into the EAM system and separated based on the category of the complaint. Categories include:

- Water quality complaint
- Pressure complaint
- Leak
- Main break
- Disruption of service
- Other observation

Water Distribution Operator shall:

- Review the complaints monthly based on category and location to identify problem areas within the distribution system and track performance against established goals.
- Communicate trends and potential problem areas of the distribution system to the Water Plant Superintendent as well as the Water Distribution Superintendent.
- Track challenges identified through the monthly analysis each year to identify seasonal trends and evaluate long-term performance.

## 7 REFERENCES

AWWA. (2015). *G200-15 Distribution Systems Operation and Management*. AWWA.

AWWA. (2011). *Partnership for Safe Water Self-Assessment Guide for Distribution System Optimization*. Denver, CO: AWWA.