

National Energy Board



Office national de l'énergie

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Service Standards

Pipeline Safety

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import and export of natural gas

Service Standards

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National Energy Board's commitment to service improvement through service standards

In today's results-based management environment, service standards have become an essential tool for building effective citizen-focused service within organizations. In addition, the recently promulgated *User Fees Act* requires that the National Energy Board establish and report on service standards against which the performance of the regulating authority can be measured.

These factors have led the Board to develop and publish service standards and to make a commitment to adjust our internal operations accordingly if the standards are not being met. The Board has reviewed a number of its processes with a goal of establishing standards for service delivery so that clients know what they may expect from the Board.

The Board's service standards identify specific delivery targets, or timelines, for key aspects of service. The following service standards have been established for a number of the Board's regulatory functions and associated services. They include:

- Release of Hearing decisions;
- Export/import authorizations;
- COGOA Applications;
- Landowner complaints;
- Audits;
- Non-hearing Section 58 application cycle times;
- Responses to general correspondence;
- Requests to the Library; and
- Information requests to the Internet site.

The Board also intends to develop additional service standards in other areas such as service pledges

or principles describing the quality of service delivery clients can expect to receive, focusing on such elements as openness, fairness, courtesy, professionalism, etc.

Release of Hearing Decisions

Following public hearings, the Board considers all the evidence brought forward as part of the public record during the proceedings. It then issues its decision to the public in the form of a 'Reasons for Decision'. The timing for the release of a Board decision following a public hearing is dependent on a number of factors including: the number of hearing days; the number of active parties in the hearing; the number of significant and contested issues; and the length of the decision itself. The Board also ensures that Reasons for Decisions are available in both official languages; therefore, the translation of the document is also a consideration in the timing of the release.

The Board has adopted a service standard that *80 percent of its Reasons for Decisions will be completed within 12 weeks or less following a public hearing.*

Export/import authorizations

The Board is responsible for reviewing applications and authorizing the exportation of oil and natural gas liquids, the importation and exportation of natural gas, and exportation of electricity. The Board will assess complete applications and render its decision within the timelines specified in the following areas:

- Short term export orders for oil, gas, and natural gas liquids – *two working days*
- Natural gas import and export orders – *two working days*
- Electricity export permits – *80 percent within 75 days*

COGOA applications

Under the *Canadian Oil and Gas Operations Act* (COGOA), the Board regulates the drilling of wells and the conduct of geological and geophysical work in Frontier areas. The Board will render its decision regarding an application to drill (or alter the condition of) a well within *21 calendar days of receiving a complete application*. For geological and geophysical applications, the service standard is *30 calendar days*.

Under the *Canada Petroleum Resources Act* (CPRA), the Board regulates Significant Discovery and Commercial Discovery Applications on Frontier lands. The Board will render a decision within *90 calendar days from the day that all information is available to begin the evaluation process*.

Landowner complaints

The Board expects regulated companies to attempt to resolve complaints from landowners before the complaint reaches the Board for resolution; however, this is not always possible.

When a landowner contacts the Board with a complaint, he or she will be *informed within 10 calendar days of the process the Board will follow to resolve the complaint*. The Board commits to resolving *80 percent of landowner complaints within 60 calendar days of receiving the initial complaint*, if there are no complicating circumstances. Some examples that could cause the service standard to exceed 60 days include cases where a more formal Board process is required to resolve the issue or if seasonal factors affect the ability to schedule an inspection promptly.

Audits

The Board is committed to conducting management systems audits in support of its mandate with respect to safety, security, environmental protection and economic efficiency. The Board conducts two types of audits, including an Onshore Pipeline audit and a financial audit. The following service standards have been adopted for Board audits:

Onshore Pipeline Regulation (OPR) audit

The Board commits to ensuring that *80 percent of draft OPR audit reports will be sent to the audited company within eight weeks of field work completion.*

Eighty percent of the final audit reports will be sent to the audited company within eight weeks of receiving the audited company's comments on the draft report.

Financial audit

The Board commits to ensuring that *80 percent of draft financial audit reports will be sent to the audited company within eight weeks of field work completion.*

Eighty percent of the final financial audit reports will be sent to the audited company with three weeks of receiving the audited company's comments on the draft report.

Non-hearing application cycle times (Section 58)

The Board receives some applications which by their nature do not require a public hearing in order to render a decision. This includes pipelines that are shorter than 40 kilometres in length, and some undertakings such as tanks, reservoirs, storage facilities, pumps, racks, compressors, loading facilities, etc. Decisions on these types of applications are considered under Section 58 of the *National Energy Board Act*.

Section 58 applications are classified into one of three categories based on their level of:

- complexity;

- the estimated number and type of information requests which may be generated;
- the probability of third-party interest; and
- the level to which a Federal Authority may become involved in the environmental assessment of the application.

Within 10 days of filing an application, applicants will be notified of the category assigned and the estimated date for release of a decision.

The following service standards have been adopted for Section 58 applications:

Category A – complexity of issues is considered minor. *80 percent of decisions will be released within 40 calendar days**

Category B – complexity of issues is considered moderate. *80 percent of decisions will be released within 90 calendar days**

Category C – complexity of issues is considered major *80 percent of decisions will be released within 120 calendar days**

** These standards are exclusive of timeouts, which are periods of time during which the Board has limited or no control over the processing of the application. For example, if an applicant has been asked to provide additional information, a timeout is the period of time between the target response date set by the Board and the date on which the applicant provides its response.*

Responses to general correspondence

The Board receives written correspondence from Canadians requesting information about a variety of energy issues. *The service standard for the Board to respond to general correspondence is 10 working days.*

Requests to the NEB Library

The Board Library receives hundreds of requests for publications or other information every year. *The standard for responding to requests from the Board's Library is one working day.*

Information requests to the NEB Internet site

The Board receives requests from the public for general information through its Internet site. Upon receipt of the request, an initial confirmation is sent automatically to the person making the request.

The service standard for responding to information requests is two working days, except for complex issues which may take longer.

How can I get more information about the NEB and its activities?

You can get more information through a series of information publications the NEB produces.

To contact the publications coordinator:

Phone: (403) 299-3562 (in Calgary)

1-800-899-1265 (toll-free)

Fax: (403) 292-5576

E-mail: publications@neb-one.gc.ca

The NEB library is located:

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