

MINISTRY PAPER No.: _____

**PERFORMANCE OF THE ELECTRICITY DIVISION FOR FINANCIAL YEAR
2006/2007 AND FOCUS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2007/2008**

1.0 Purpose of Ministry Paper

The purpose of this Ministry Paper is to inform Parliament and the public about the performance of the Electricity Division over the 2006/2007 Financial Year and its main focus for the 2007/2008 Financial Year.

2.0 Role and Functions of the Electricity Division

Established in 1956, the Electricity Division, also called the Government Electrical Inspectorate (GEI), an external Division of the Ministry, 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 carried out in a manner consistent with the Jamaica Standards Regulations
- (b) to educate the society on the importance of having electrical installations inspected and certified
- (c) 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 safeguard of persons and property (buildings and their contents) from hazards arising from the use of electricity. This objective is 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. Certificates of fitness are subsequently issued to the supplying authority by the Electricity Division. Certificates attest to the safety of installations and their adherence to the governing standards. The Chief

Electrical Inspector is the sole arbiter on all electrical matters on which the Jamaica Standards Regulations may be silent.

2.3 The Main Functions of the Electricity Division are:

- (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 power grid of the Jamaica Public Service Company Ltd. (JPSCo).
- (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 by 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, 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 deliberate on technical standards, materials, equipment and the preparation of new specifications.

3.0 Achievements for Financial Year 2006/2007

3.1 Main Achievements

On an average twenty four thousand (24,000) inspections are done annually. However, during the period under review, a total of thirty four thousand three hundred and thirty-four (34,334) applications were received of which thirty one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four (31,854) or 92.8% of installations were inspected. Of this number, twenty seven thousand nine hundred and fourteen (27,914) or 81.3 % were granted certification and three thousand nine hundred and forty (3,940) or 11.47 % were rejected.

The Division was heavily involved in the investigation work dealing with the island-wide power outage by the JPSCo. This consumed a fair amount of the time of senior personnel in that Division.

3.2 Approved Budget

A total of \$61.54 M was approved for the Division's budget for the 2006/2007 Financial Year. Of this amount \$21.6 M was for emoluments including traveling (248,945 km) and subsistence. The balance of approximately \$40 M was to cover all other costs including rental of offices at four (4) locations island-wide.

3.3 Service Fees

The revenue collected for the financial year 2006/07 stood at \$11.9 M. Based on current fee structure which has not been revised for sometime, it is estimated that the Government subsidizes the cost of inspection by approximately \$1,500 per request. This represents a significant amount of subsidy considering that over 33,344 requests were made in the 2006/07 financial year. The average inspection fee is \$346.60.

4.0 Main Programmes for 2007/2008 Financial Year.

(a) Core Functions - Inspections

It is anticipated that some thirty-five thousand (35,000) inspections will be carried out over Financial Year 2007/2008.

(b) Quality of Service

The Division would like to improve the quality of its service to the public and to generally operate in a more efficient and effective manner. However, this is constrained by the low level of inspection fee and the high level of subsidy on inspection service. The Ministry is convinced that the public is quite willing to pay a cost-recovery fee if customers are able to receive an improved quality of service.

The Ministry will therefore be exploring the feasibility of the Division charging a cost-recovery inspection fee with the expectation that the Division will be able to retain a portion of its revenue to improve quality of service in terms of waiting time by customers. More revenue will enable more inspectors to be employed thereby reducing the waiting time of customers.

(c) Re-inspection Service

It should be noted that generally, once a building is inspected and a customer enters into a contract with JPSCo, where there is any major modification to the wiring of the premises, a re-inspection should be done. This is often not the case and there are many premises with unsafe wiring posing fire hazard. Re-inspection is necessary to ensure conformity with standards considering the danger posed by faulty wiring.

Especially in the case of say some inner-city communities, a fire caused by faulty wiring could cause major dislocation to several families who often live in close proximity.

The division will be placing emphasis on re-inspection, especially among high risk users. This includes recertifying installation at public buildings, markets and plazas thereby ensuring that the current standards are upheld and safety is assured.

(d) Training

The Division will be providing training for electrical inspectors and technical assistants to improve knowledge of contemporary inspection methods and the implementation of a single performance standard throughout the Division. This to be achieved partly through efforts at influencing tertiary institutions to offer courses aimed at enhancing the knowledge-base of practicing electricians.

Emphasis will be on technical assistants, who work along with the electrical inspectors in carrying out inspection duties. The aim is to ensure that all technical assistants are so equipped to enable them to fill vacant positions for electrical inspectors. Last year, two (2) technical assistants were successful in the electricians licensing examinations and were duly promoted to vacant posts of electrical inspectors.

The Division will continue the thrust to train its staff in customer service and store keeping. The HEART Trust/NTA will be developing courses to facilitate the needs of the Division. Currently, the course outlines and curricula for electrical inspectors and practicing electricians are being prepared by the HEART Trust in conjunction with representatives from the Division and stakeholders in the industry.

(e) Computer Programme and Network

At present, submissions for electrical installations to be inspected have to be made to a divisional office that is responsible for the region in which the installation will be carried out. For some time now the Division wants to institute a computerized system whereby submissions can be made at any of its offices, irrespective of the location of the installation itself. To date the Division has not been successful in implementing this system. Effort will be pursued again this year to implement this plan, even on a phased basis. This would result in an improvement in the quality of service as it would enable licensed electricians to make submissions at the nearest office, for installations located in a remote community, without having to journey to the office for the region in which the installation is located.

The development of a computer network is crucial to the smooth operation of the Division and will assist in the accessing of information from any of its four (4) offices with minimum delay. From time to time efficiency has been compromised by inability to capture relevant data that could help to better plan the operations and optimize the use of resources. The network would enable research and the capture, manipulation and evaluation of data to facilitate prompt responses to internal and external requests.

In linking all offices to a single databank, information received by the Division in general, could be accessed from any of its offices. The Ministry and the Central Information Technology Office (CITO) have been assisting the Division toward this end.

5.3 Budget for Financial Year 2007/2008

The proposed 2007/2008 budget is approximately \$62.7 M comprising provisions for the compensation of employees in an amount of \$30 M, procurement of goods and services amounting to some \$4.7 M, and traveling & subsistence allowance totaling approximately \$21.1 M.

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