

Customer Service Performance

2001

Pennsylvania Electric Distribution Companies

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Bureau of Consumer Services**

**2001 Report
on Customer Service Performance**

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<http://puc.paonline.com>

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Introduction

The Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act (Act) requires that the electric distribution companies (EDCs) are to maintain, at a minimum, the levels of customer service to their customers that were in existence prior to the Act's effective date. In response, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) took steps to ensure the continued provision of high-quality customer service through the implementation of regulations that require the EDCs to report statistics on important components of customer service (52 Pa. Code §§ 54.151—54.156) including telephone access to the company, billing frequency, meter reading, timely response to customer disputes, the proper response to customer disputes and payment arrangement requests, compliance with customer service rules and regulations, and interacting with customers in a prompt, courteous and satisfactory manner. After the Commission has received and analyzed an adequate supply of data from the measurements required under these regulations, it will develop quality of service benchmarks and standards for the EDCs. The establishment of benchmarks and standards will be the subject of a future proceeding at the Commission.

The PUC adopted the final rulemaking that established the reporting requirements on April 23, 1998. The EDCs began reporting the required data to the Commission in August 1999 for the first six months of that year and followed up with a report on annual activity in February 2000. Beginning in February 2001, the EDCs began submitting annual data on telephone access, billing, meter reading and response to customer disputes. The companies began surveying customers who had initiated an interaction with their EDC in January 2000. The PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) receives annual survey results on or before April 1 of each year. The BCS has summarized the information supplied by the EDCs and the survey data into the charts and tables that appear on the following pages. The data that appears for PECO Energy (PECO) combines both PECO's electric accounts and its natural gas accounts. PECO is unable to report this information separately.

This is the third year that the Commission prepared a report on EDC customer service performance. This report fulfills the requirement of Section 54.156 of the reporting requirements that provides for the Commission to annually produce a summary report on the customer service performance of each EDC using the statistics collected as a result of the reporting requirements.

The reporting requirements at § 54.155 include a provision whereby the BCS is to report to the Commission various statistics associated with informal consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests that consumers file with the Commission. The BCS is to report a "justified consumer complaint rate", a "justified payment arrangement request rate", "the number of informally verified infractions of applicable statutes and

regulations”, and an “infraction rate” for each EDC. These statistics are also important indicators of service quality. The BCS has calculated and reported these statistics for a number of years in its annual report, *Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation: Electric, Gas, Water and Telephone Utilities*. The BCS will report the 2001 data in the report to be released later this year. The report offers detailed descriptions of each of these statistics as well as a comparison with statistics from the previous year. Access to the 2001 *Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation* and the *2001 Report on Electric Distribution Company Customer Service Performance* will be available on the Commission’s website: <http://puc.paonline.com>.

I. Company-Reported Performance Data

In accordance with the quality of service reporting requirements, the EDCs reported statistics for 2001 regarding telephone access, billing, meter reading and disputes not responded to within 30 days. For each of the required measures, the EDCs report data by month and include a 12-month average. PECO Energy (PECO) statistics include data for both the company's electric and natural gas accounts. With the exception of the telephone access statistics and the small commercial bill information, the required statistics are directly related to the regulation in 52 Pa. Code Chapter 56 Standards and Billing Practices for Residential Utility Service.

A. Telephone Access

The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards include telephone access to an electric distribution company (EDC) because customers must be able to readily contact their EDC with questions, complaints, requests for service and to report service outages and other problems. This component of customer service may be next in importance to consumers after service reliability and safety.

In order to produce an accurate picture of telephone access, the EDCs must report three separate measures of telephone access. The three separate measures avert the possibility of masking telephone access problems by presenting only one or two parts of the total access picture: 1) percent of calls answered within 30 seconds, 2) average busy-out rate and 3) call abandonment rate. For example, an EDC may report that it answers every call in 30 seconds or less. If only this statistic is available, one might conclude that the access to the EDC is very good. However, if this company has only a few trunk lines into the company's call distribution system, once these trunks are at capacity, other callers receive a busy signal when they attempt to contact the company. Thus, a large percent of customers cannot get through to the company and telephone access is not very good at all. Therefore, it is important to look at both percent of calls answered within 30 seconds and busy-out rate to get a clearer picture of the telephone access to the EDC.

Further, the call abandonment rate indicates how many customers drop out of the queue of customers waiting to talk to an EDC representative. A high call abandonment rate is most likely an indication that the length of the wait to speak to a company representative is too long. Statistics on call abandonment are generally inversely related to statistics measuring calls answered within 30 seconds. The 1999-2001 figures presented later in this report conform to the inverse relationship. The EDCs answering a high percent of calls within 30 seconds had low call abandonment rates and those answering a lower percent of calls within 30 seconds had higher call abandonment rates.

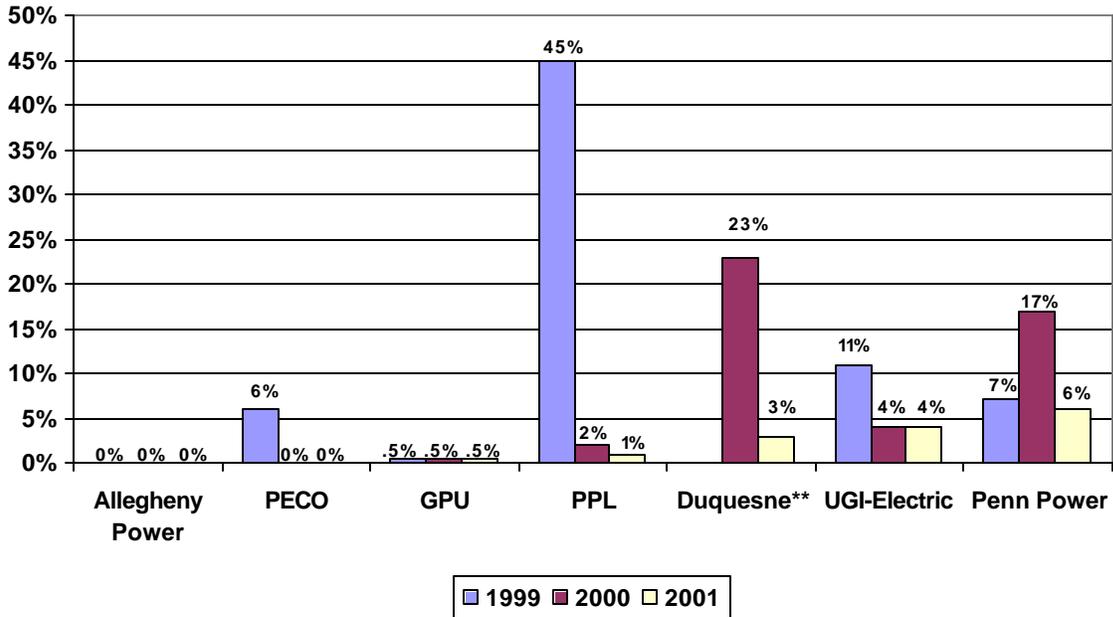
For the most part, attempted contacts to a call center initially have one of two results: they are either "received" by the company or they receive a busy signal and thus are not "received" by the company. Calls in the "busy-out rate" represent those attempted calls that received a busy signal or message; they were not "received" by the company because the company lines or trunks were at capacity.

For the calls that are "received" by the company, the caller has several options. One option is to choose to speak to a company representative. When a caller chooses this option, the caller enters a queue to begin a waiting period until a company representative is available to take the call. Once a call enters the queue, it can take one of three routes: it will either be abandoned (the caller chooses not to wait and disconnects the call); it will be answered within 30 seconds; or it will be answered in a time period that is greater than 30 seconds. The percent of those calls answered within 30 seconds is reported to the Commission. The percent that are answered in more than 30 seconds is the inverse of this percent. Thus, if 80% were answered within 30 seconds, 20% were answered in more than 30 seconds.

This report presents the EDC statistics on telephone access in the following three charts:

- Busy-out rate: the ratio of calls to the EDC's call center(s) that received a busy signal divided by the number of calls that were "received" by the call center(s).
- Call abandonment rate: as noted earlier, abandoned calls are those that successfully enter the queue to wait to speak to a company representative. However, at some point, the caller ended the call prior to speaking to a company representative.
- Percent of calls answered within 30 seconds: these are customers who were able to get into the company's call center queue and waited to speak with a representative of the EDC.

1. Busy-out Rate*



*12-month average

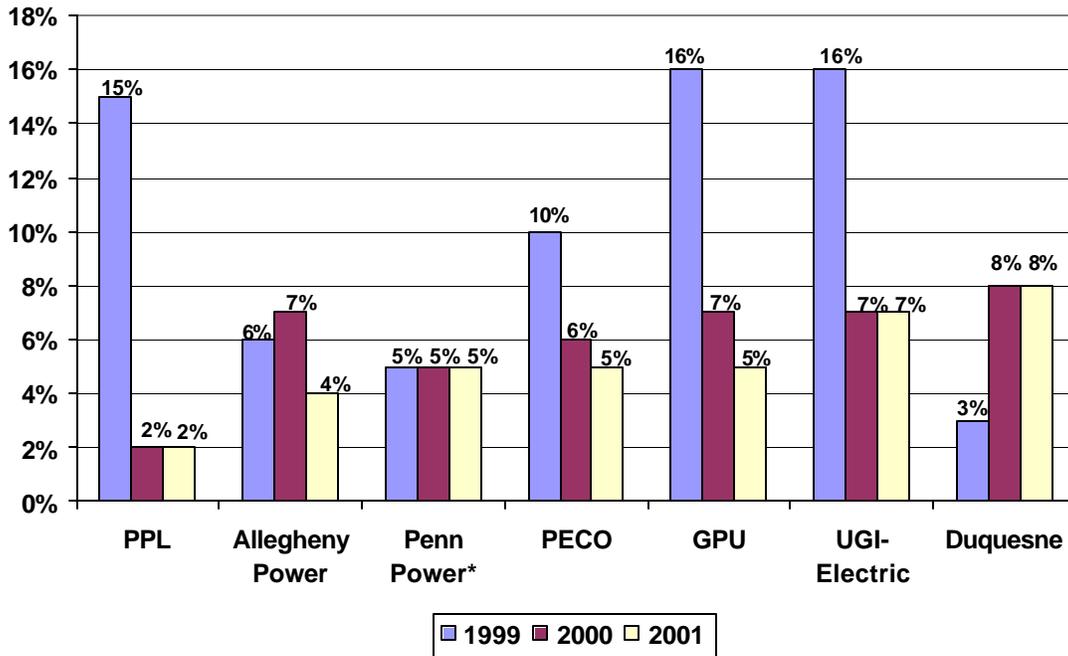
** Duquesne was not able to report a busy-out rate for 1999. The 1999 report erroneously presented this statistic as 0% for Duquesne.

The Commission’s Regulations at 52 Pa. Code Chapter 54.153(b)(1)(ii) require that the EDCs are to report to the Commission the average busy-out rate for each call center, business office, or both. Section 54.152 defines busy-out rate as the number of calls to a call center that receive a busy signal divided by the total number of calls that are received at a call center. For example, an EDC with a 10 percent average busy-out rate means that 10 percent of the customers who attempted to call the company received a busy signal (and thus did not gain access) while 90% of the customer calls were received by the company. If the EDC has more than one call center, it is to supply the busy-out rates for each center as well as a combined statistic for the EDC as a whole. The chart above presents the combined busy-out rate for each major EDC during 1999, 2000 and 2001.

The 2001 results show that the average busy-out rate for each of the EDCs was either lower or the same as in 2000. Specifically, Duquesne reported significant improvement which it attributes to the use of a new facility in 2001 that provides a recorded message to customers regarding the extent of power outages as well as anticipated restoration times. PPL increased staffing levels at its customer contact center and lowered its average busy-out rate in 2001. Allegheny Power reports that it uses a service facility/bureau to take overflow calls. This effectively eliminates busy signals for customers and is used primarily during periods of service outages when call volume is

high. GPU hired and trained 40 temporary employees to prepare for peak call volume during the months of June through September.

2. Call Abandonment Rate



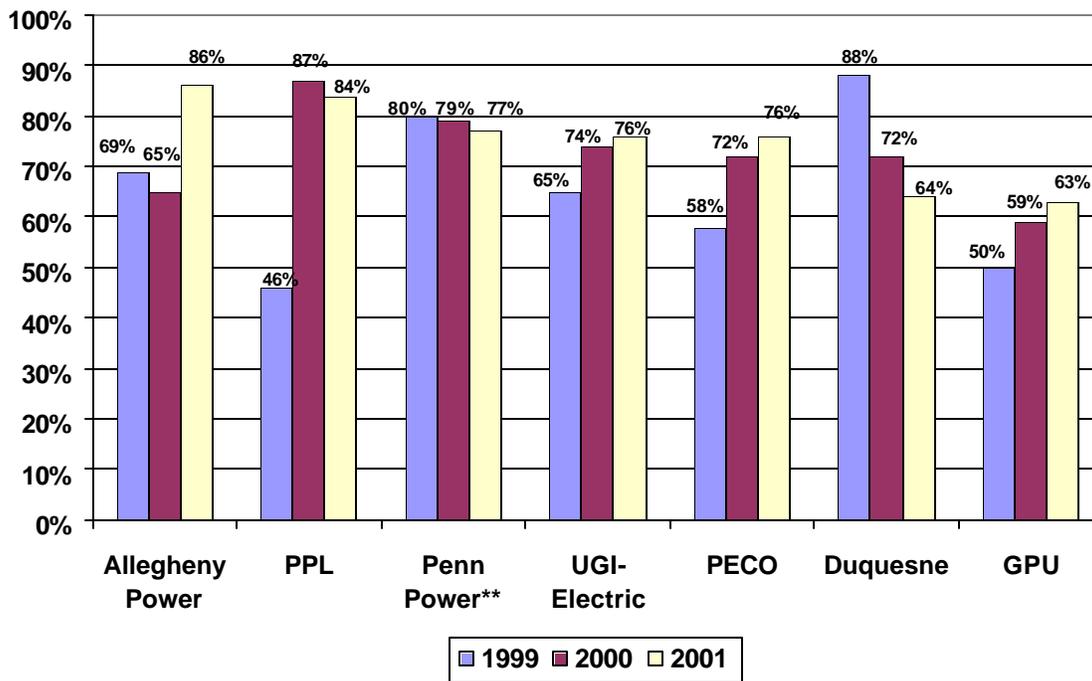
* Penn Power’s telecommunications package is not able to count calls as “abandoned” until after the call has been “received” (in a queue waiting to speak to a representative) for more than 30 seconds. Thus, calls abandoned before 30 seconds have elapsed are not included in this figure. Statistics for the other EDCs include all abandoned calls.

Consistent with §54.153(b)(1)(iii), the EDCs are to report to the Commission the average call abandonment rate for each call center, business office, or both. Call abandonment rate is the number of calls to an EDC’s call center that were abandoned divided by the total number of calls that the EDC received at its call center or business office (§54.152). For example, an EDC with a 10% call abandonment rate means that 10% of the calls received were terminated by the customer prior to speaking to an EDC representative. As the time that customers spend “on hold” increases, customers have a greater tendency to hang up, thus, the call abandonment rates increase. If the EDC has more than one call center, it is to supply the call abandonment rates for each center as well as a combined statistic for the EDC as a whole. The chart above presents the combined call abandonment rate for each major EDC during 1999, 2000 and 2001.

The above statistics illustrate that all the EDCs either reduced their call abandonment rate from 2000 to 2001 or maintained their 2000 rate. The companies that

improved attribute the reduction in call abandonment rates to increased staffing levels and the use of improved technology.

3. Percent of Calls Answered Within 30 Seconds*



* 12-month average

** Penn Power’s telecommunications package is not able to distinguish the difference between an answered call and an abandoned call until the call has been “received” (in queue waiting to speak to a representative) for more than 30 seconds. As a result, this statistic represents calls that were answered and/or abandoned within 30 seconds. Statistics for the other EDCs represent answered calls only.

Pursuant to Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at §54.153(b), each EDC is to “take measures necessary and keep sufficient records” to report the percent of calls answered within 30 seconds or less at the company’s call center. The section specifies that “answered” means that an EDC representative is ready to render assistance to the caller. An acknowledgement that the consumer is on the line does not constitute an answer. If an EDC operates more than one call center (a center for handling billing disputes and a separate one for making payment arrangements, for example), the EDC is to provide separate statistics for each call center and a statistic that combines performance for all the call centers. The chart above presents the combined percent of calls answered within 30 seconds for each of the major EDCs in Pennsylvania during 1999, 2000, and 2001.

The 2001 results give evidence of improved access for Allegheny Power, PECO, GPU and UGI-Electric. Allegheny Power's percent of calls answered within 30 seconds improved by 21 percentage points between 2000 and 2001. Allegheny attributes this improvement to new call center employees and an increase in the number of employees answering calls full time. The company also cites new technologies for the company's call center, as well as a better understanding and use of these new technologies. Duquesne notes that the attrition of experienced call center representatives affected telephone access performance negatively in 2001.

B. Billing

Pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. §1509 and the Standards and Billing Practices for Residential Utility Service (52 Pa. Code Chapter 56. 11), a utility is to render a bill once every billing period to all customers. The customer bill is often the only communication between the company and a customer thus underscoring the need to produce and send this very fundamental statement to customers at regular intervals. The failure of a customer to receive a bill each month frequently generates consumer complaints to the EDC and sometimes to the Commission. It also adversely affects collections performance.

1. Number and Percent* of Residential Bills Not Rendered Once/Billing Period

Company	1999		2000		2001	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Duquesne	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Penn Power	4	0%	3	0%	3	0%
UGI-Electric	N/A**	N/A**	4	.01%	8	.01%
Allegheny Power	44	.01%	55	.01%	88	.01%
PPL	7,307	.68%	907***	.08%***	499	.04%
GPU	1,089	.12%	1,631	.18%	1,046	.11%
PECO	8,033	.47%	8,056#	.47%#	9,120#	.53%#

* 12-month average

** The Public Utility Commission granted a temporary waiver of this reporting requirement to UGI-Electric and thus, the company did not supply this data for 1999.

*** PPL 2000 data revised from 2000 report

Reported numbers are higher than actual numbers due to computer errors caused by rebilling previously billed accounts.

Pursuant to §54.153(b)(2)(i), the reporting requirements require that the EDCs report the number and percent of residential bills that the EDC failed to render pursuant

to the \$56.11. The above table presents the average monthly percent of residential bills that each major EDC failed to render once every billing period during 1999, 2000 and 2001.

In reviewing its performance regarding this measure, PPL became aware of the fact that it had not been producing this statistic accurately. In prior years, PPL reported a number and percent that included bills the company rendered late each month in addition to the number and percent it failed to render completely. PPL is now able to report just those bills it fails to render, as required. The company was able to correct its statistics for 2000 but not for 1999. The table on the previous page reflects this revision.

PECO also indicated that its reported numbers for residential bills not rendered are inaccurate. According to PECO, the reported numbers are higher than the actual numbers for both 2000 and 2001. However, the company is unable to report accurate data for this measure. PECO relates the inaccuracy to its current project of installing automatically read meters (AMRs). As the company installs the new meters at properties where it has had difficulty obtaining meter readings, PECO is often required to correct previously estimated bills. When this occurs, PECO's computer system deletes the prior billing history and recognizes only the current make-up bill. As a result, when the computer reports the number of bills not rendered, it includes these rebilled accounts. PECO expects that the numbers of bills not rendered will decline significantly after the company completes its AMR project.

2. Number and Percent* of Bills to Small Commercial Customers Not Rendered Once/Billing Period

Company	1999		2000		2001	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Duquesne	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Penn Power	9.7	0%	0	0%	3	0%
UGI-Electric	N/A**	N/A**	1	.01%	0	.01%
Allegheny Power	58	.07%	92	.12%	110	.14%
PPL	2,681	1.87%	784***	.47%***	316	.19%
GPU	174	.15%	560	.50%	300	.27%
PECO	2,838	1.57%	3,009#	1.66%#	3,840#	2.12%#

* 12-month average

** The Public Utility Commission granted a temporary waiver of this reporting requirement to UGI-Electric and thus, the company did not supply this data for 1999.

*** PPL data revised from the 2000 report

Reported numbers are higher than actual numbers due to computer errors caused by rebilling previously billed accounts.

Moreover the reporting requirements require that the NGDCs report the number and percent of small commercial bills that the EDC failed to render in accordance with 66 Pa.C.S. §1509. The reporting requirements at §54.152 define a small business customer as a person, sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, association or other business that receives electric service under a small commercial, small industrial or small business rate classification. In addition, the maximum registered peak load for the small business customer must be less than 25 kilowatt hours within the last 12 months.

The table on the preceding page presents the average monthly percent of bills to small commercial customers that each major EDC failed to render once every billing period during 1999, 2000 and 2001. As with residential bills, PPL had previously reported inaccurate data for this measure. PPL reported data that included not only bills not rendered but also bills rendered late. The company revised statistics for 2000 and is now able to report this information accurately.

PECO reported that, as with the number of residential bills not rendered once every billing period, its project to install AMRs has resulted in artificially high numbers of bills not rendered for small commercial customers during 2000 and 2001. As the company installs the new meters at properties where it has had difficulty obtaining meter readings, PECO is often required to correct previously estimated bills. When this occurs, PECO's computer system deletes the prior billing history and recognizes only the current make-up bill. As a result, when the computer reports the number of bills not rendered, it includes the accounts that actually had been rendered a bill. When the AMR project is complete, PECO predicts that the numbers of small commercial bills not rendered will decline.

C. Meter Reading

Regular meter reading is important to produce accurate bills for customers who expect to receive bills based on the amount of service they have used. The concern that regular meter reading may be one of the customer service areas where EDCs might reduce service under electric competition was responsible for the following measures being included in the reporting requirements. The Commission's experience is that the lack of actual meter readings generates large numbers of complaints to companies, as well as to the Commission. The reporting requirements include three measures of meter reading performance that correspond with the meter reading requirements of the Chapter 56 regulations at §56.12(4)(ii), §56.12(4)(iii) and §56.12(5)(i).

**1. Number and Percent* of Residential Meters Not Read
By Company or Customer in Six Months**

Company	1999		2000		2001	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
UGI-Electric	2	.004%	3	.005%	1	.000%
Penn Power	0	.000%	1	.001%	14	.009%
Allegheny Power	195	.030%	52	.001%	76	.010%
PPL	47	.004%	46	.004%	270	.021%
Duquesne	54	.010%	146	.028%	442	.083%
GPU	534	.057%	1,322	.139%	875	.097%
PECO	6,229	.340%	15,000	.806%	13,956	.722%

* 12-month average

Pursuant to Chapter 56, Section 12(4)(ii), an EDC may estimate the bill of a residential ratepayer if EDC personnel are unable to gain access to obtain an actual meter reading. However, at least every 6 months, the EDC must obtain an actual meter reading or ratepayer supplied reading to verify that the estimated readings are accurate. The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at §54.153(b)(3)(i) require EDCs to report the number and percent of residential meters for which they have failed to comply with this section of Chapter 56.

UGI-Electric attributes its success at complying with the Commission’s meter reading requirements to the company’s commitment to installing meters equipped with “encoder receiver transmitters” (ERTs) at locations where it is difficult to obtain an actual meter reading. In addition, UGI-Electric reported that a static workforce during 2001 aided in meeting the meter reading requirements. From 2000 to 2001, GPU reduced the number of meters not read as required every six months. Beginning in mid 2001, GPU field personnel began receiving reports from GPU’s information system that indicate meters with consecutive estimates. Field personnel use this information to target these accounts to obtain actual meter readings. The company particularly notes progressive improvement from mid-year through end of 2001.

PECO is undergoing a mass installation of AMR meters in two counties which historically have had hard to access meters. PECO is expecting its performance to improve when it completes this project. For 2001, PPL reported an increased number of meters not read as required. PPL attributes the increase to changes in its organization and decreased staffing levels. PPL decided to implement an automated meter reading system beginning in 2002 and, as a result, the company did not increase the size of its meter-reading work force. Duquesne also reported an increase in the number of residential meters for which it failed to obtain a reading as required by Chapter 56, 12(4)(ii). According to Duquesne, the increase is due to a high number of communication failures

in one type of meter that the company uses. Duquesne reports that it is replacing these meters as they fail to ensure that the company is able to obtain the required readings in the future.

**2. Number and Percent* of Residential Meters Not Read
In Twelve Months**

Company	1999		2000		2001	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
UGI Electric	0	0%	1	.002%	0	.000%
PPL	8	0%	8	.001%	1	.000%
Allegheny Power	33	.01%	4	.001%	5	.000%
Penn Power	0	0%	0	.000%	3	.002%
Duquesne	10	0%	36	.006%	63	.012%
GPU	55	.01%	456	.048%	317	.035%
PECO	3,864	.21%	6,521	.350%	12,196	.633%

* 12-month average

Pursuant to Chapter 56, Section 12 (4)(iii), a company may estimate the bill of a residential ratepayer if company personnel are unable to gain access to obtain an actual meter reading. However, at least once every 12 months, the company must obtain an actual meter reading to verify the accuracy of either the estimated or ratepayer supplied readings. The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at §54.153(b)(3)(ii) require the EDCs to report the number and percent of residential meters for which they fail to meet the requirements of this section.

GPU reported improvement at obtaining meter readings within the required 12-month period. Reports from GPU's information system indicating meters with consecutive estimates allowed field personnel to target these accounts to obtain actual meter readings. PECO expects improvement in obtaining actual meter readings. Although the 2001 numbers are nearly double what they were in 2000, the company saw improvement from January to December 2001. The company expects to see continued improvement as it completes its project of installing automatic meter reading devices. Duquesne reported increased numbers of meters not having been read in compliance with the 12-month requirement during 2001. Duquesne explained that the increase is due to communication failure from one type of the company's meters. Duquesne is changing the equipment when it fails to ensure that the company is able to obtain the required readings in the future.

3. Number and Percent* of Residential Remote Meters Not Read in Five Years

Company	1999		2000		2001	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
GPU	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
UGI-Electric	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Duquesne	15	.003%	0	0%	0	0%
PECO	483**	21%**	438	19%	295	18%
Penn Power***	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Allegheny Power***	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
PPL***	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* 12-month average

** 6-month average. PECO was unable to supply these numbers for the first six months of 1999.

*** No remotely read meters

Pursuant to §56.12(5)(i), a utility may render a bill on the basis of readings from a remote reading device. However the utility must obtain an actual meter reading at least once every five years to verify the accuracy of the remote reading device. Under the quality of service reporting requirements at §54.153(3)(iii), the EDCs must report to the Commission the number and percent of residential remote meters for which it failed to obtain an actual meter reading under the timeframe described in Chapter 56.

C. Response to Disputes

When a ratepayer advises a utility that he or she disputes any matter covered by Chapter 56 regulations, each utility covered by the regulations must issue its report to the complaining party within 30 days of the initiation of the dispute pursuant to §56.151(5). A complaint or dispute filed with a company is not necessarily a negative indicator of service quality. However, a company's failure to promptly respond to the customer's complaint is an indication of poor service. Further, to respond beyond the 30-day limit is an infraction of Chapter 56.151(5) and the cause of complaints to the Commission.

**Number of Residential Disputes That Did Not
Receive a Response within 30 Days**

Company	1999	2000	2001
Penn Power	21	4	3
UGI-Electric	14	8	8
Duquesne	55	11	146
PECO	2,125	295	156***
Allegheny Power	N/A*	675	205
GPU	193	305	416
PPL	4,023**	2,374	3,209

* The Commission granted Allegheny Power a temporary waiver of the section that requires reporting this statistic. Allegheny Power did not report this information for 1999.

** This number was revised from the 1999 report based on new information supplied by PPL.

*** Due to computer problems, PECO is not able to report this information for the first seven months of 2001. This number is from the latter five months of the year.

The Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at §54.153(4) require each EDC to report to the Commission the actual number of disputes for which the company did not provide a response as required under the Chapter 56 regulations, in other words, not within 30 days.

In 2001, Allegheny Power significantly reduced the number of residential customer disputes for which it failed to issue a company report within 30 days. The company states that the improvement may be attributed to increased awareness of the requirements and ongoing training efforts. PECO's 2001 numbers reflect only data from the latter five months of the year. Computer programming issues at the company prevented the PECO from collecting this information for January through July. However, PECO notes that from September through the end of the year, the company issued company reports to all customer disputes within 30 days.

Duquesne attributes its increase in the number of times it failed to issue a company report on time to an increase in the number of customer inquiries and disputes that stemmed from communications equipment failures that caused bills to be estimated. The company expects that as equipment problems are rectified, there will be a corresponding improvement in issuing company reports in accordance with Chapter 56 requirements.

PPL reports that the increase in the 2001 volume of residential disputes that did not receive a response within 30 days was due to the more than 18,000 billing complaints it received in 2001.

II. Customer Transaction Survey Results

In conformance with the Reporting Requirements for Quality of Service Benchmarks and Standards at 52 Pa. Code Chapter 54 .154, the EDCs are to report to the Commission the results of telephone transaction surveys of customers who have had interactions with the EDC. The purpose of the transaction surveys is to assess the customer's perception regarding this recent interaction. The regulations specify that the survey questions are to measure access to the company, employee courtesy, employee knowledge, promptness of the EDC response or visit, timeliness of the EDC response or visit and satisfaction with the handling of the interaction.

The EDCs must carry out the transaction survey process using survey questionnaires and procedures that provide the Commission with uniform data that can be used to directly compare customer service performance among Pennsylvania's EDCs. A survey working group composed of EDC representatives and PUC staff designed the survey questionnaire and survey procedures.

As a result of discussions, the working group decided that the focus of the surveys should be on residential and small commercial customers who have recently contacted their EDC. The working group decided that industrial customers and large commercial customers should not be included in the survey since these large customers have specific representatives within their respective EDCs with whom they discuss any problems, concerns, and issues and thus should be excluded from the survey. The survey sample also excludes all transactions that result from company outbound calling programs or other correspondence. However, transactions with consumers who use an EDC's automated telephone system exclusively, as well as those who contact their EDCs by personal visit are eligible to be surveyed.

In 2000 and 2001, six of the major EDCs used a common survey company to conduct the survey and compile the results of interviews. Technical limitations precluded the seventh company from using this survey company to conduct the survey of its customers. This EDC used a different independent research firm to conduct the survey and compile the results. However, the EDC used the same sampling and other survey procedures as well as the same questionnaire as the other EDCs. The EDCs agree that the Commission and others can use the survey results to directly compare EDC customer service performance.

Beginning in January 2000, the two survey research firms began conducting the surveys. Each month since then the EDCs randomly select a sample of transaction records for consumers who have contacted the company within the past 30 days. The EDCs transmit the sample lists to the research firms and the research firms randomly select individual consumers from the sample lists. The survey firms contact individual

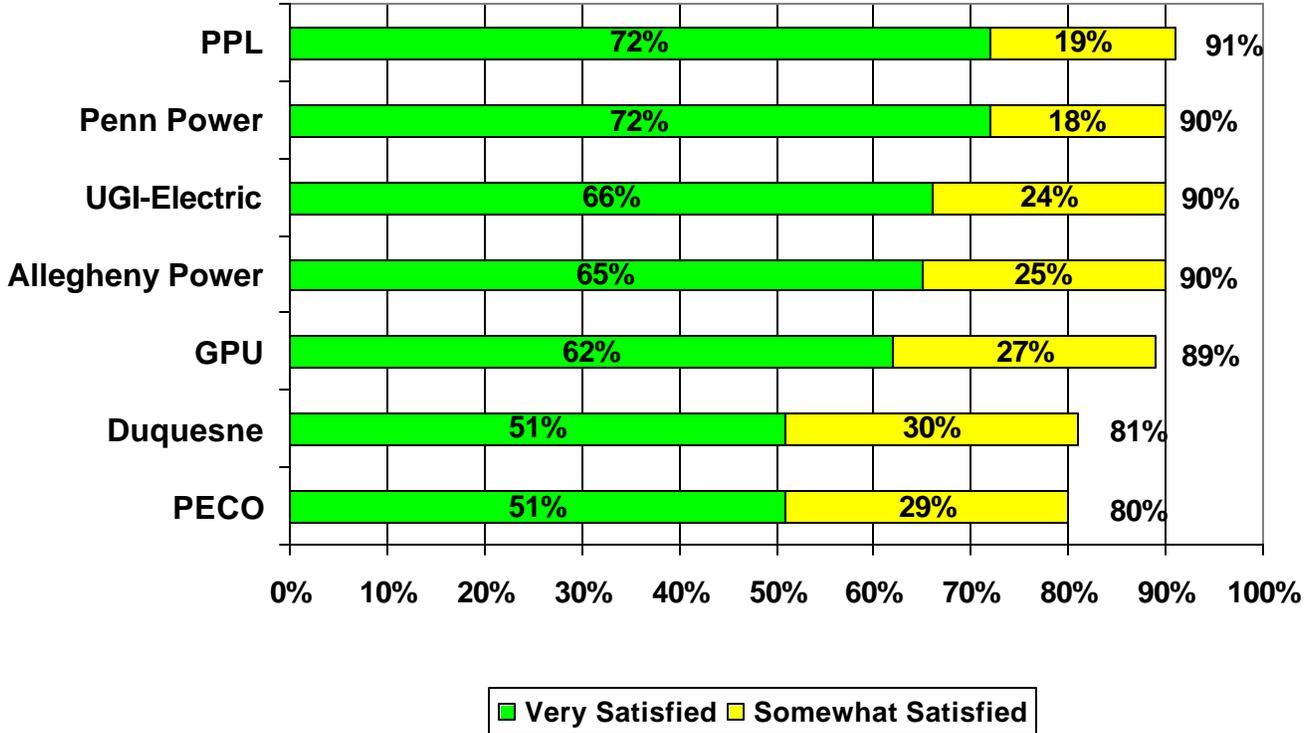
consumers in the samples until they meet a monthly quota of completed surveys for each EDC.

The survey firms completed approximately 700 surveys for each EDC in 2000 and in 2001. With a sample of this size, there is a 95 percent probability that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 5 percentage points of what the results would be if all customers who had contacted their EDCs had been surveyed. Thus, the sampling plan meets the requirement of §54.154(5) that specifies that the results must be statistically valid within plus or minus 5%.

Survey working group members agreed that the 700 completed surveys should include 200 contacts about credit and collection issues and 500 contacts about all other types of issues. Under this plan, the credit/collection contacts do not dominate survey results. Credit and collection contacts are from customers who need to make payment arrangements, customers who had received termination notices, those who had their service terminated and others with payment problems. Contacts about other issues include calls about billing questions and disputes, installation of service requests, metering problems, outage reporting, questions about choosing an electric generation supplier and a variety of other reasons.

The survey results have produced several volumes of data. This report summarizes the 2000 and 2001 data into the charts and tables that appear later in this chapter and in the appendix. The chapter presents the results from the 2001 surveys while Appendix A, Table 1 presents the results from both 2000 and 2001. The appendix also provides additional survey data including information about the number and type of consumers who participated in the 2001 survey. In all charts and tables, “don’t know” and “refused” responses to survey questions were removed from the analysis.

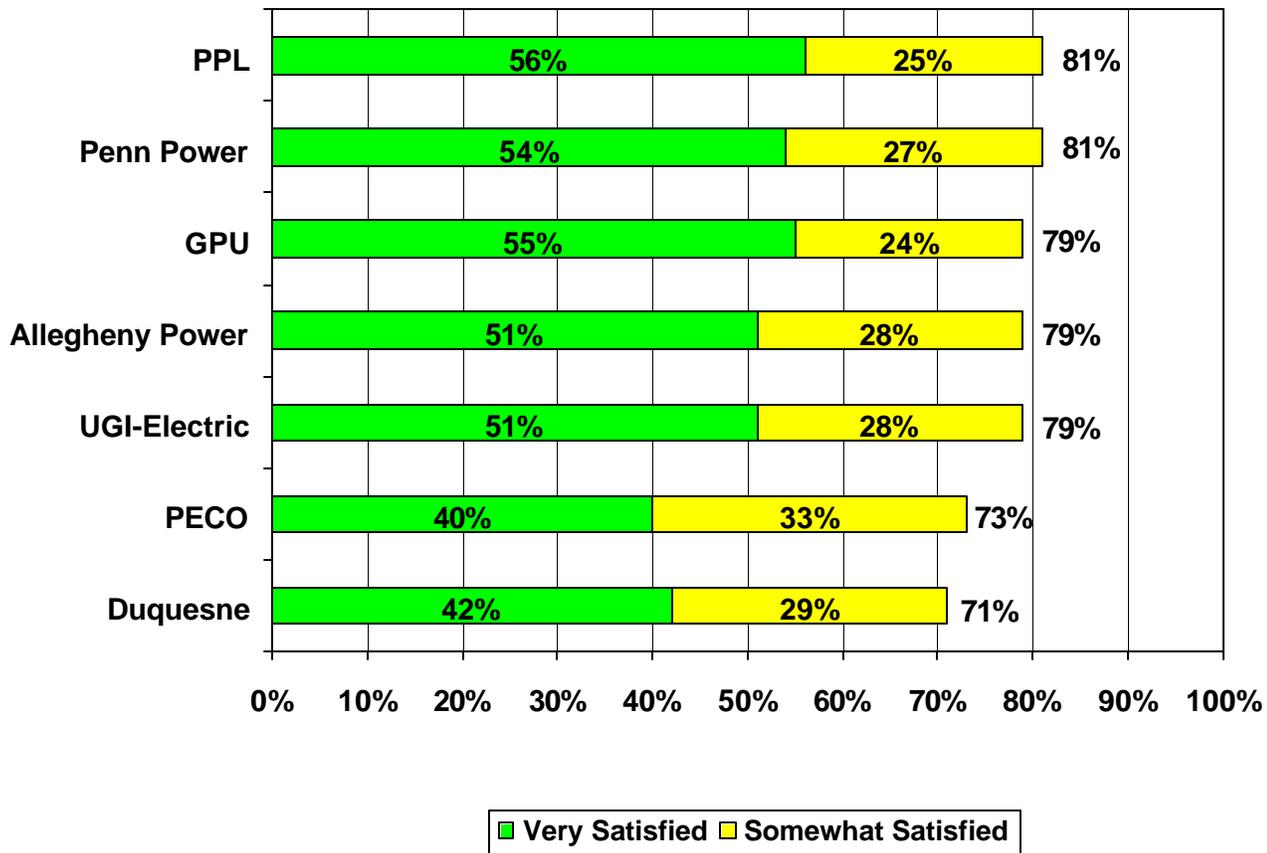
A. Satisfaction With the Ease of Reaching the Company 2001



One of the first survey questions asks the consumer “How satisfied were you with the ease of reaching the EDC?” The bar chart above presents the percent of consumers who indicated satisfaction with the initial stage of their contact with the EDC. The Commission believes that an EDC should offer reasonable telephone access to its customers. Customers must be able to readily contact their company with questions, complaints, requests for service and to report service outages and other service problems. For 2001, the average of the percents of customers who responded that they were either “satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the ease of reaching the company is 87%. Survey results from the 2001 and 2000 surveys are available in Appendix A, Table 1.

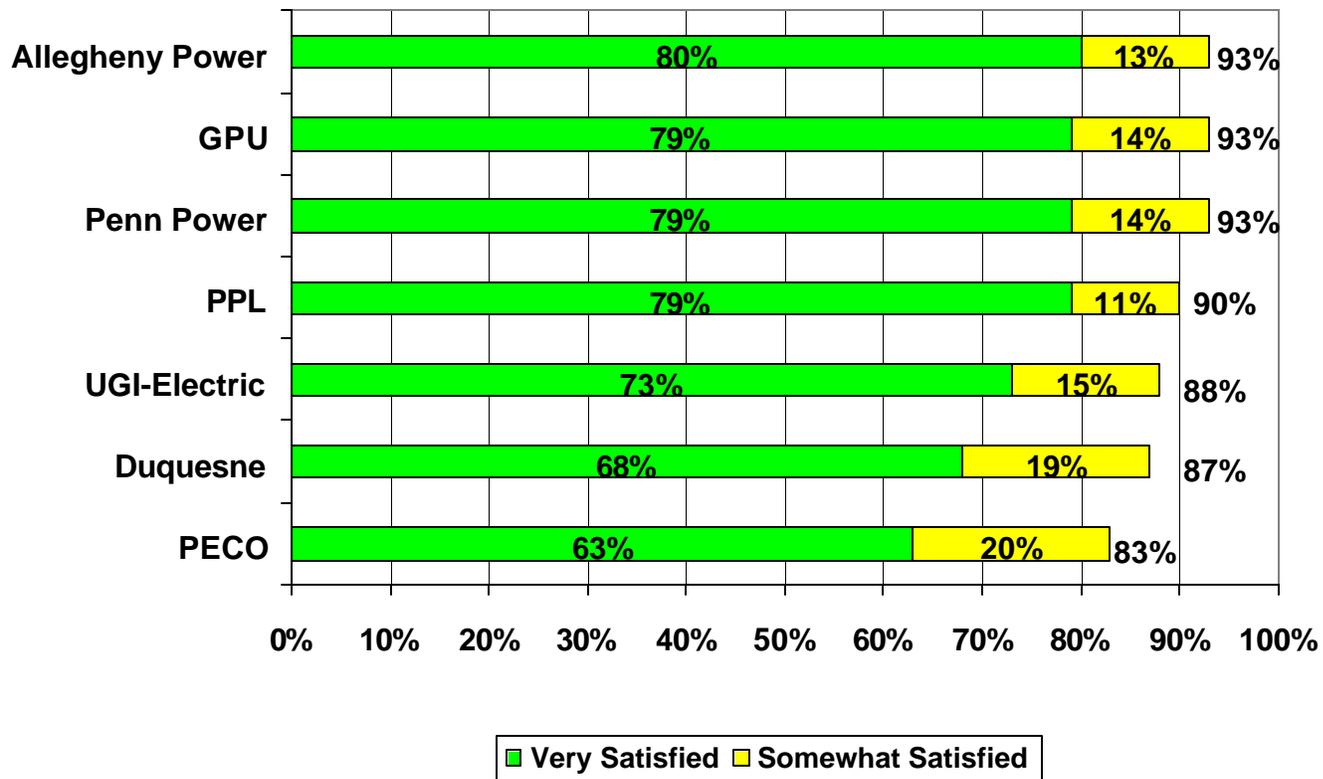
Survey interviewers ask consumers other questions about the preliminary stages of their contact with the EDC. Since all the companies use an automated telephone system to filter calls and save time and money when dealing with consumer calls, the survey asks consumers several questions about their experience with using the EDC’s automated system. The chart that follows presents the level of satisfaction consumers expressed about using the EDCs’ automated telephone systems.

B. Satisfaction with Using an EDC's Automated Phone System 2001



In many instances, when a customer contacts his or her EDC, the customer is first greeted by the company's automated telephone system. In some situations, the telephone system is able to satisfy the customer's reason for calling the company and the customer does not need to speak with a "live" representative. In other instances, the customer must listen to a menu of selections and make choices before being able to speak with a company representative. Table 1 in Appendix A presents the 2000/2001 satisfaction results from questions about the ease of using the EDCs' automated system. Table 6 in Appendix A shows the percent of customers who indicated they had used their EDC's automated system. Table 3 offers the 2001 and 2000 satisfaction results as to how easy it was to use the automated system and how well the choices of the automated system fit the nature of the customer's complaint. Table 3 also shows responses regarding satisfaction with the amount of time it took to speak with a company representative. In 2001, the average percent of consumers who indicated they were either "satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with this wait is 85%.

C. Satisfaction with EDC Representative’s Handling of Contact 2001



As indicated in Appendix A, Table 6, an average of 89% of surveyed customers indicated that they had spoken with a company representative during their most recent interaction with the company. Each consumer who indicated that they had spoken with a company representative was asked the following question: “Thinking about your conversation, how satisfied were you with the way in which the company representative handled your contact?” The chart above presents the percent of customers who indicated satisfaction with the conversation they had with this company representative. Appendix A, Table 1 provides both 2000 and 2001 results regarding satisfaction with how EDC representatives handled their contact to the EDC.

The customer’s overall rating is most likely comprised of several components including the courtesy and knowledge of the representatives. The reporting requirements specify that the transaction survey questionnaire must measure consumers’ perceptions of

employee courtesy and knowledge. The following table shows the 2001 consumers' ratings of these attributes of the company representatives with whom they interacted. Appendix A, Table 4 provides a comparison of 2000 and 2001 ratings.

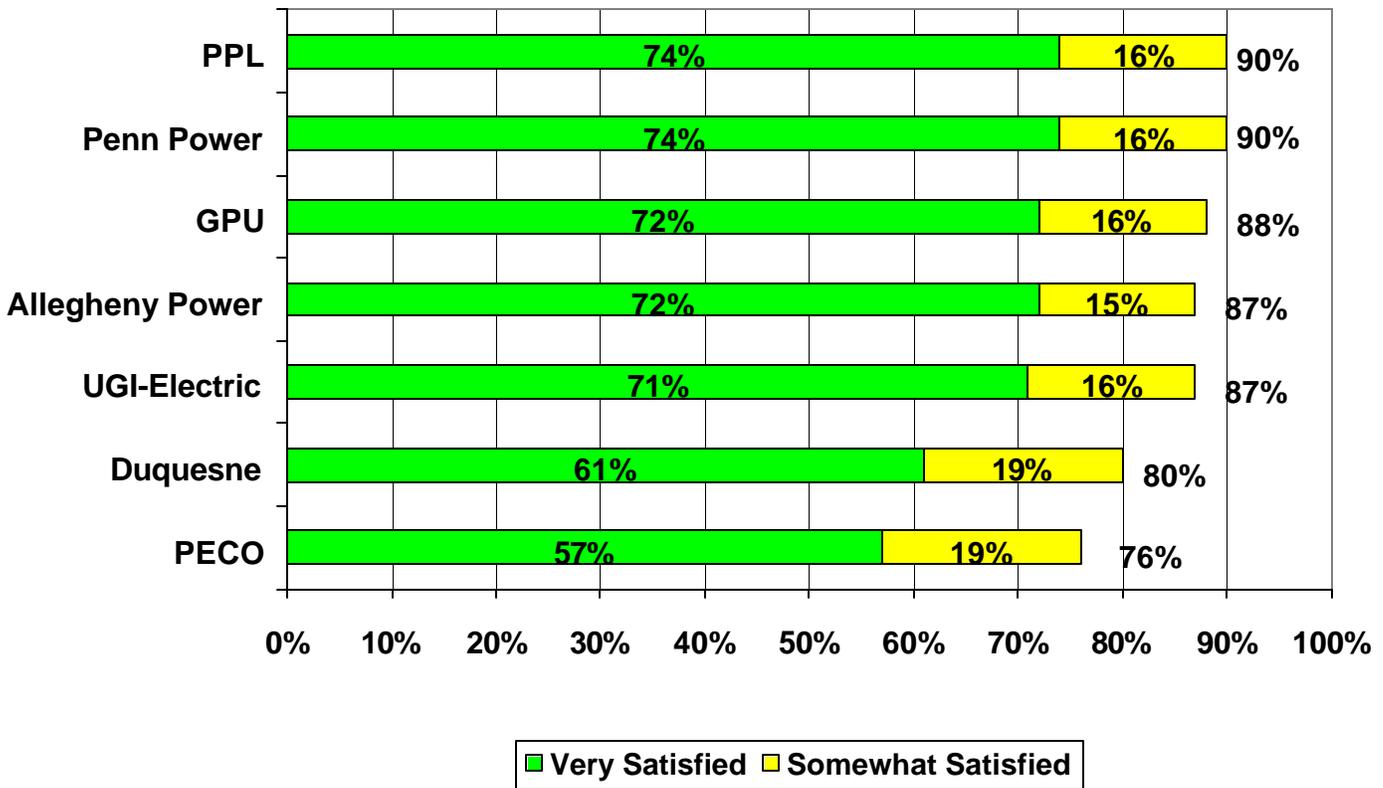
D. Consumer Ratings of EDC Representatives 2001

Company	Call Center Representative's Courtesy		Call Center Representative's Knowledge	
	Somewhat Courteous	Very Courteous	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable
GPU	9%	89%	18%	77%
Penn Power	8%	88%	14%	79%
Allegheny Power	6%	89%	16%	77%
PPL	7%	87%	17%	77%
UGI-Electric	11%	81%	18%	74%
Duquesne	13%	80%	19%	71%
PECO	13%	77%	25%	62%
Average	10%	84%	18%	74%

As indicated above, on average 94% of consumers indicated that the company person they spoke with was either “very courteous” or “somewhat courteous” with the vast majority indicating that the representative was “very” courteous. An average of 92% rated the company representative as “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable”; the vast majority gave a “very” knowledgeable rating. The ratings for both courtesy and knowledgeable were unchanged from 2000.

Consumers who indicated that they had “field” visits from company representatives were asked to rate the field representative on courtesy and knowledge. In addition, these consumers were given the opportunity to rate the field visit for promptness (the speed with which the EDC responded to the customer’s need) and timeliness (acting at the agreed upon or promised time), as well as overall satisfaction with the visit. Only a relatively small percent of customers indicated that they had a premise visit from a company representative—a range of 10-24% of the various EDCs’ consumers in 2001. The 2000 and 2001 survey results of consumer perceptions regarding these visits appear in Table 5 of Appendix A.

E. Overall Satisfaction with EDC Quality of Service 2001



Consumers most likely use a variety of factors to determine their overall level of satisfaction. The ease of reaching the company may be the beginning factor. Other factors might include the use of the company’s automated telephone system, the wait to speak to a company representative and the courtesy and knowledge of that representative. If a field visit is part of the interaction, this too would affect the consumer’s overall assessment. The chart above presents the results of the responses to the question, “Considering all aspects of this recent contact with the company, how satisfied were you with the quality of service provided by the company?” In 2001, the industry average showed that 85% of the customers were satisfied (69% very satisfied) with the overall quality of service they received from their EDC’s. Table 1, Appendix A provides both 2000 and 2001 results regarding overall customer satisfaction.

As indicated in the introduction to the section on customer surveys, the EDCs and survey firms divided consumer contacts into credit and collection contacts and contacts about other matters. The working group members had expressed concern that the

satisfaction level of consumers who had contacted the company about credit and collection issues would negatively influence the overall satisfaction ratings. However, the opposite proved to be true in both 2000 and in 2001. For all but one EDC in both years, a greater percentage of customers who contacted the EDC about credit and collection issues responded that they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” than the customers who contacted the EDC about other issues. Appendix A, Table 2 presents the level of satisfaction by these two categories of contacts as well as the overall satisfaction level for each of the EDCs.

III. Conclusion

This report fulfills the Commission's responsibility to summarize the quality of service statistics that the EDCs reported to the Commission. The EDCs will continue to report data annually to the Commission. The telephone access, billing, meter reading and dispute data is due to the Commission on February 1 of each year. On April 1 of each year, the Commission is to receive the results of the customer surveys conducted during the previous year. The BCS report, *Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation*, will again provide statistics associated with 2001 consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests filed with the Commission by the customers of the major EDCs.

The Commission uses three sources of data to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the quality of customer service experienced by customers of the major EDCs. The first source is the EDC itself that reports telephone access statistics, number of bills not rendered monthly to residential and commercial customers, meters not read according to Chapter 56 regulations, and disputes not handled within 30 days. The second source of data is drawn from the consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests filed with the Commission by the customers of the EDCs. Finally, the Commission uses the results of the surveys of EDC customers who have had customer-initiated contacts with the EDCs. This latter source of information tells the Commission about the ease of contacting the companies, the customers' view of the knowledge and courtesy of the companies' customer service representatives, as well as the customers' overall satisfaction with the way the company handled the contacts.

All this information allows the Commission to monitor the quality of the EDCs' customer service performance. As the Commission fulfills its responsibility to ensure that the level of service quality provided to customers does not deteriorate under competition, it will move toward the establishment of benchmarks and standards regarding the various measures presented in this report. The establishment of benchmarks and standards for performance will be the subject of a separate proceeding. In the meantime, the Commission will keep close watch on the data drawn from its various sources of information regarding this important aspect of EDC performance.

The survey results show that for the most part, customers are satisfied with the service they receive from their EDCs. The comparison of 2000 and 2001 survey results indicate no apparent deterioration in EDC service to customers. On the other hand, the company-reported performance data indicates that there is room for improvement on the part of Pennsylvania's major EDCs. For example, the number of accounts not billed, meters not read and complaints not responded to within 30 days represent infractions of the Chapter 56 regulations. For some EDCs, performance on these measures has improved since 1999 but for others performance has either been stable or deteriorated. A

review of the telephone access statistics indicates that some EDCs have improved or maintained an acceptable level of access while others have reported decreasing access or have not improved poor access sufficiently. The Commission will closely monitor the EDCs' performance on these measures through their reported statistics and through complaints to the Bureau of Consumer Services, for these are the types of issues that generate contacts to the BCS.

Appendix A

Table 1

Survey Results 2000/2001

Company	Satisfaction w/ Ease of Reaching the Company*		Satisfaction with Using EDC's Automated Phone System*		Satisfaction with EDC Representative's Handling of Contact*		Overall Satisfaction with EDC Quality of Service*	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001
Allegheny Power	87%	90%	77%	79%	89%	93%	89%	87%
Duquesne	83%	81%	73%	71%	85%	87%	82%	80%
GPU	84%	89%	77%	79%	90%	93%	86%	88%
PECO	86%	80%	77%	73%	82%	83%	79%	76%
Penn Power	92%	90%	80%	81%	95%	93%	90%	90%
PPL	88%	91%	79%	81%	86%	90%	85%	90%
UGI-Electric	90%	90%	83%	79%	89%	88%	88%	87%
Average	87%	87%	78%	78%	88%	89%	86%	85%

* percent of consumers who answered either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" when asked how satisfied they were with this aspect of their recent contact with the EDC

Appendix A

Table 2

Overall Satisfaction: Credit/Collection Calls v. Other Calls 2000/2001

Company	Credit/Collection		Other		Overall	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001
Allegheny Power	95%	92%	86%	86%	89%	87%
Duquesne	83%	85%	81%	78%	82%	80%
GPU	89%	90%	84%	88%	86%	88%
PECO	81%	76%	78%	76%	79%	76%
Penn Power	95%	95%	88%	88%	90%	90%
PPL	84%	92%	85%	90%	85%	90%
UGI-Electric	91%	89%	87%	85%	88%	87%
Average	88%	88%	84%	84%	86%	85%

* Other calls include all categories of contacts to an EDC other than those related to credit and collection. Other calls include contacts about trouble or power outages, billing matters, connect/disconnect requests, customer choice and miscellaneous issues such as requests for rate information or name and address changes.

Appendix A

Table 3

Contacting an EDC 2000/2001

Company	Ease of Using EDC's Automated Telephone System*		Satisfaction w/Choices offered by Automated Telephone System**		Satisfaction w/Wait to Speak to an EDC Representative**	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001
Allegheny Power	87%	87%	84%	85%	84%	89%
Duquesne	83%	79%	78%	75%	81%	76%
GPU	87%	89%	84%	84%	84%	85%
PECO	84%	82%	84%	77%	83%	78%
Penn Power	86%	84%	86%	86%	92%	93%
PPL	86%	89%	84%	86%	84%	88%
UGI-Electric	89%	89%	88%	83%	86%	87%
Average	86%	86%	84%	82%	85%	85%

* percent of customers who answered “very easy to use” or “somewhat easy to use” when asked how easy it was to use the EDC’s automated telephone system

** percent of customers who answered either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” to questions about satisfaction with how well the choices of the automated telephone system fit the nature of the customer’s call and how satisfied they were with the amount of time it took to speak to a company representative

Appendix A

Table 4

Consumer Ratings of EDC Representatives 2000/2001

Company	Call Center Representative's Courtesy				Call Center Representative's Knowledge			
	Somewhat Courteous		Very Courteous		Somewhat Knowledgeable		Very Knowledgeable	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001
GPU	10%	9%	85%	89%	16%	18%	75%	77%
Penn Power	5%	8%	93%	88%	13%	14%	82%	79%
Allegheny Power	8%	6%	88%	89%	16%	16%	77%	77%
PPL	9%	7%	85%	87%	19%	17%	73%	77%
UGI-Electric	10%	11%	83%	81%	18%	18%	76%	74%
Duquesne	13%	13%	78%	80%	21%	19%	67%	71%
PECO	14%	13%	77%	77%	21%	25%	66%	62%
Average	10%	10%	84%	84%	18%	18%	74%	74%

Appendix A

Table 5

Premise Visit from an EDC Field Representative 2000/2001

Company	Overall Satisfaction w/Way Premise Visit Handled*		Satisfaction that Work Completed Promptly*		Field Rep's Courtesy**		Field Rep's Knowledge**		Field Rep's Respect For Property**		Satisfaction that Work Completed in a Timely Manner*	
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001
Allegheny Power	87%	93%	79%	80%	98%	100%	100%	100%	92%	94%	85%	83%
Duquesne	85%	93%	80%	85%	93%	95%	96%	96%	93%	93%	80%	89%
GPU	93%	92%	80%	84%	98%	96%	98%	98%	96%	90%	89%	91%
PECO	87%	86%	73%	73%	97%	96%	90%	95%	93%	89%	79%	79%
Penn Power	94%	95%	82%	86%	100%	100%	100%	97%	100%	95%	88%	87%
PPL	88%	91%	82%	86%	96%	100%	100%	94%	95%	96%	85%	91%
UGI-Electric	94%	91%	89%	83%	98%	95%	92%	95%	95%	93%	92%	91%
Average	90%	92%	81%	82%	97%	97%	97%	96%	95%	93%	85%	87%

* percent of consumers who answered either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” when asked how satisfied they were with this aspect of the field visit

** percent of consumers who described the company field representative as “very courteous” or “somewhat courteous”; “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” and “very respectful” or “somewhat respectful” when asked about their perceptions about various aspects of the field representative’s visit to the consumer’s home or property

Appendix A

Table 6

Characteristics of Survey Participants 2001

EDC	Consumers Surveyed	% Residential Consumers	% Commercial Consumers	% Who Used EDC's Automated Phone System	% Who Spoke with a Company Representative	% Who Needed a Premise Visit
Allegheny Power	700	93%	7%	83%	87%	10%
Duquesne Light	700	98%	2%	83%	81%	21%
GPU	700	97%	3%	79%	96%	15%
PECO	700	93%	7%	74%	95%	24%
Penn Power	708	94%	6%	60%	83%	11%
PPL	700	96%	4%	79%	83%	12%
UGI-Electric	698	94%	6%	72%	97%	16%
Average	701	95%	5%	76%	89%	16%

