

LEWA NEWS

The newsletter of the **Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority**

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RESPONSIBILITIES
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IMPACT OF UNSETTLED BILLS IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES



Concerned about

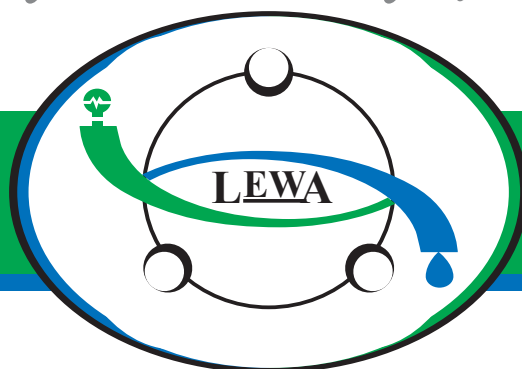
Electricity Services?

such as...

**Connection Quotations ♦ Connections ♦ Disconnections
Reconnections ♦ LEC Network Disruptions?**

The Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) has developed electricity services regulatory instruments. These instruments include the Electricity Quality of Service and Supply Standards (QoSSS). QoSSS sets out the minimum service and quality standards for the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC). QoSSS became operational since 2007.

In pursuit of quality service delivery of electricity services





LEWANews

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Foreword by the Chief Executive

A warm welcome to the first edition of the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) newsletter for the 2020/21 Financial Year. It is my fervent hope that you are continuing to take care in these unprecedented times, because COVID-19 Pandemic is continuing to have a devastating impact on our lives. You are urged to observe all safety regulations and recommendations, which the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have issued, to minimise the risk of infections. One of the recommendations made by the two organisations is that the public must always observe good hygiene by washing hands with running water and soap for at least 20 seconds. If water is not available, people are requested to frequently use sanitisers that have a minimum of 70% alcohol content.

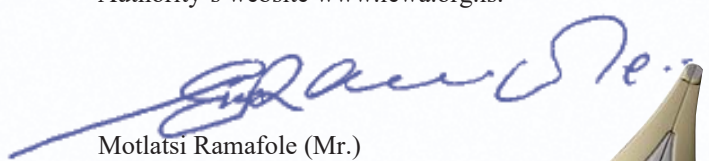
Turning to the contents of the current publication, we cover some of the events and general education issues about the regulated electricity, urban water and sewerage sectors for the period April to June 2020. During this period, the Authority took measures to protect its staff, stakeholders and the public against the spread of COVID-19, as reflected below. Moreover, the publication focuses on the Quality of Service and Supply Standards (QoSSS) provisions concerning new electricity and water connections. The benefits of paying bills on time, electricity and water efficiency tips are outlined so that in the end, customers may put them into practice and save money. Timely payment of bills ensures that licencees' deliver good services on time, and hence customers are urged to do their part.

As mentioned above, our priority is to raise awareness and empower stakeholders on electricity and water regulatory issues. In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Authority, observed MoH and WHO guidelines, by screening employees regularly for fever and issuing them with




Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Visitors were required to wear face masks and use LEWA provided hand sanitisers. This publication further outlines customers' rights and responsibilities about electricity and water services. It is also important to discuss the tariffs filing and review procedures followed by LEWA when assessing tariffs Applications received from regulated entities. The procedures are explicated so that stakeholders may understand them and, in future, make inputs into electricity and water tariffs determination processes. We furthermore, remind readers about the LEWA customer complaints handling processes. This is for them to be aware of the remedies at their disposal when they are not satisfied with the services rendered to them. Last but not least, the possible impact of COVID-19 pandemic on water resources is another covered area, so that the readers can understand the importance of urban water services in the fight against the Pandemic.

You are invited to subscribe to the LEWA newsletter to receive an electronic copy of it. A form is available on the Authority's website www.lewa.org.ls.



Motlatsi Ramafole (Mr.)
Chief Executive





LEWA moves to protect employees, public amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

As with other organisations, which have been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) in the period April to June 2020, took into consideration the prevailing situation, Government regulations and World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on the Pandemic and duly implemented them.

As a further step, LEWA developed its Workplace Guidelines Against COVID-19, to protect the health and safety of every employee in the workplace. As provided in the Guidelines, the Authority, amongst its other responsibilities, screened employees daily for fever and provided hand sanitisers with at least 70% alcohol content to employees. Employees were provided with at least two face masks to wear, while at work or commuting. They were not allowed to enter LEWA offices without the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as required by the law. Employees were reminded to take measures to minimise contact between themselves on one hand as well as between them and the public on the other. LEWA offices were also sanitised periodically to disinfect them.

In terms of contributing to the national efforts aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19, the Guidelines provided that the Authority would report any diagnosis of COVID-19 at work to the Ministry of Health and to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, as well as investigate the cause and take appropriate measures. The Authority would support any contact tracing measures initiated by the

Ministry of Health. In addition, members of the public, clients or suppliers and customers entering the LEWA workplace were requested to wear face masks and use the provided hand sanitisers. Fortunately, no incident has been reported at LEWA during this quarter.

In line with Government lockdown regulations, the Authority's staff were directed to work from home for most of April 2020 until early May, 2020. A notice informing the public of the closure of the offices and that staff was working from home was made and posted on LEWA's website. Despite the restrictions on movement, the Authority remained on alert to ensure that LEWA services and those of regulated companies were availed to customers and other stakeholders. For example, the Authority's Board met to consider the LEC's 2020/21 tariff review Application in April 2020 as well as decide on appropriate responses in light of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic situation.

When Government eased restrictions on movement at the beginning of May 2020, the Authority opened its doors to stakeholders, customers and the public. Unnecessary visits by the public to the offices were still put on hold. Since the Pandemic was on the rise the Authority would explore ways of ensuring employees' safety through the development and implementation of the Work From Home Guidelines (WFHG) as an additional measure. The LEWA Workplace Guidelines Against COVID-19 were still in operation.

Impact of unsettled bills in the provision of services

The provision of quality and reliable service is not only hampered by vandalism, system capacity and ageing infrastructure but also by unpaid service bills. The Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) have always related as to how they experience payment defaults on services fully rendered to customers.

Non-payment of services puts great distress in the provision of quality of services to customers. It is, therefore, important that customers should understand that services rendered to them were made possible by other customers who pay for services provided by the regulated utilities. Moreover, the utilities have to cover expenses which are incurred when they provide services. Customers are urged

to pay their bills on time to enable the regulated entities to provide quality services without hindrance.

LEC and WASCO are allowed a certain Revenue Requirement (RR), which is mainly obtained through payments made by customers to them for service delivery. Through RR, the regulated utilities must improve and expand their service offering. Utilities charge customers for the services that they offer for financial sustainability. Where customers fail to make timely payment of services they hamper the regulated utilities' efficiency from attending to reported faults due to lack of funds. When utilities face a shortage of resources due to customer debts, they may be prompted to prioritise to save costs, leading to poor service delivery to many customers. Additionally, unpaid bills may negatively affect the regulated utilities' cash flow, which may result in manpower shortages and poor maintenance of infrastructure.

The Authority further advises the electricity and water customers to pay their bills on time and draw payment plans while drawing monthly budgets.



Mr Mpiti Phatela-WASCO's Area Manager in Qacha's Nek explaining the importance of paying for urban water and sewerage services bills to stakeholders.



A community leader in the town of Mokhotlong appealing to stakeholders to report and avoid illegal electricity and urban water connections.

Customers' rights and responsibilities on provided services

In the fullness of joy after getting connections to either electricity or urban water and sewerage services, many customers are not aware of their rights and responsibilities which are tied to the services they received.

As a first step, both Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) must explain all the issues pertaining to rights and obligations to new customers. Since there can be no rights without responsibilities the Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) and the Urban Water and Sewerage Services (UWSS) subsector customers must be aware of their responsibilities. Some of the customer's responsibilities on billing are briefly mentioned below.

[Access your monthly bills and ensure the meter is accessible](#)

WASCO customers receive their consumption bills every month through the Short Message Service (SMS). Alternatively, the customers can search for their accounts information from the Company's website. The bills may reflect actual meter readings or estimates. WASCO customers are advised to ensure that meters can be easily accessed in clean areas and away from dogs or immovable structures. This will ensure that WASCO meter readers take actual consumption figures. For LEC most domestic customers are on prepayment billing.

[Do not tamper with electricity/ water meter](#)

It is illegal for the customer to remove the meter or tamper with it. The meter is the property of WASCO and not that of a customer. LEC customers are also prohibited from tampering with electricity meters, either through opening or breaking of the seals or even bypassing them. Any meter fault should be reported to LEC or WASCO immediately for it to be fixed.



Check the accuracy of the bill

When a WASCO customer is in doubt about the amount of billed service, he or she is advised to compare the meter readings against the one reflected on the bill. Differences in readings may occur. In some cases, a customer's consumption may have increased between the time WASCO read the meter and when reconciliation happens. A customer may also compare the consumption on the current bill to the one received at the same time during the previous month or year. If wrong readings were taken or the meter had malfunctioned, WASCO will reconcile the figures.

Pay bill on time

Customers have a responsibility to pay unsettled bills on time. In the UWSS subsector, WASCO can disconnect services within ten working days after the due date for payment has lapsed. In the ESI, LEC can disconnect service within five (5) working days after the due date for payment has expired. However, a customer has to be provided with written notice of two days before a disconnection can be effected.

Lodging complaints

In the event that customers are not satisfied with the services rendered to them, they should lodge their complaints to either LEC or WASCO in writing. Thereafter, they should wait for at least two weeks for the complaint to be resolved by the concerned utility. If a customer does not get a response from the utility or the complaint was resolved in an unsatisfactory manner, he/she should lodge the complaint with the Authority for it to intervene.

Terms, conditions and charges for electricity connection

In terms of the Lesotho Electricity Authority Act, 2002, as amended, the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) has to protect the interests of all classes of consumers of electricity and water services as to terms and conditions, and price of the supply of electricity and water.

LEWA is therefore mandated to ensure that electricity is provided to industries and businesses, as well as domestic, public and government consumers, private education and health institutions reliably and efficiently. Several regulatory tools, rules, policies and guidelines have been developed to assist in monitoring performance and compliance

of the regulated utilities while providing services. These include the Electricity Quality of Service and Supply Standards (QoSSS), a regulatory tool that sets the timeframes for the provision of services.

The Lesotho Electricity Corporation Connection Policy of 2007 also sets conditions for connection to supply and the related costs. The Policy prescribes that connections that are effected within 50 meters from the supply point should

be set at M2, 000.00. With respect to connections of over 50 meters from the supply point, charges are based on estimated direct costs of connection to cover network access charge (actual costs). For a better understanding of pertinent processes, terms and conditions undertaken before the actual connections, LEC's connections process for domestic and business customers are summarised below.

Connections Process (Domestic and Business Customers)

Stage	Service / Stage	Action	Documents Required	By Whom	Applicable Fee	Turn-Around Time
1	Wiring Test	Properly fill in LEC's Form A and B	Passport/ ID (Copy)	Your Electrician	No fee Applicable	Within 5 working days
2	Survey Application	Apply for Survey at LEC	Wiring Test Certificate Passport	Customer	M 100.00 Domestic Supply M 250.00 Business Supply	Within 10 working days
3	Quotation Ready	Collect and sign the Quotation	Application Fee Receipt	Customer	N/A	Will expire in 60 Days from the date the quotation was created if there's no payment made
4	Service Connection	Pay the amount on the quotation as per the terms and conditions of the quotation	Application fee receipt and copy of the quotation	Customer	Pay M500.00 if the quotation is M2000.00. or 60% of whether quotation is more than M2000.00.	30 working days from the date of payment regardless of whether quotation was fully settled or 60% paid.
5	Commission	Inspection of Service Connection	Advice Form	Metering (LEC)	No fee	Within 7 working days
6	Registration	Registration of customers by Prepayment	Advice Form (complete)	Prepayment (LEC)	No fee	24 hours

Source: <https://www.lec.co.ls/services>

QoSSS' terms and conditions on electricity quotations and connections

Quotations for electricity supply

To be issued 10 working days where there is an existing infrastructure and within 30 working days where extensions are required.

Electricity supply connection

- ◆ To be provided within 30 working days, where there is an existing LEC infrastructure and within two months where the Company is required to make extensions to the network.
- ◆ If new connections are to be installed or if supply is required for industrial/commercial customers, the period for supply may be negotiated.

Terms, Conditions and Charges for Supply of Urban Water, Sewerage Services

In the Urban Water and Sewerage Services (UWSS) subsector, regulated activities are water abstraction, treatment, production, transmission, distribution and supply, storage of water for treatment, distribution or onward supply, the delivery of water to the trunk or main pipelines, and the treatment and disposal of wastewater by the sewerage system.

The Authority has to monitor Water and Sewerage Company's (WASCO) performance on the regulated activities. One of the methods used is to monitor the extent to which WASCO provides services following the Urban Water Quality of Service and Supply Standards (QoSSS) and other relevant instruments. The following conditions and the steps should be followed by customers to be provided with water services connection. The related costs are also indicated.

Steps for WASCO'S New Connections Process

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit any of WASCO's offices to request for a new water connection.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff at the customer care offices shall establish whether the area in which a customer stays is reticulated.
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a customer's site is in a reticulated area, she/ he will have to pay M50.00 for a survey. The survey is done to establish the distance between a customer's site and the main water pipe. The maximum distance allowed to draw water from the main water pipe is 150 meters.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the survey indicates that a customer's site is within 150 meters, a quotation will be prepared immediately through Geographic Information System (GSI) or within six working days. The customer will be informed to collect it when it is ready.
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The customer will be expected to pay the quoted amount for a connection. The quoted amount shall be paid in full and a connection must be made within 10 working days where the existing infrastructure is within 150m

Steps for WASCO'S New Connections Process

1-25 Meters	◆ M1500
26-50 Meters	◆ M2500
51-100 meters	◆ M3500
100-150 meters	◆ M4500

Source: <http://www.wasco.co.ls/new-water-connections/>



A LEWA District Committee Member seeking clarification on connection charges at a public meeting in Thaba-Tseka.



Attendees of LEWA's public meeting in Thaba-Tseka district.

Urban Water QoSSS terms and conditions on quotations and connections

Quotation for Water Supply

To be issued six (6) working days where there is existing infrastructure and the distance from the distribution network pipe is within 150m. If new pipes are required, the quotation would be issued within ten (10) working days.

Water Supply Connection

To be provided within ten (10) working days if existing infrastructure is within 150 m, and within thirty (30) working days if the distance is greater than 150m but less or equal to 1000 m.

Quotation for Sewer Supply

The quotation for sewer supply is to be provided six (6) days where there is an existing infrastructure and the distance is within 90m. Where there is an existing infrastructure and the distance is greater than 90m but not more than 500m, a quotation for sewer supply is to be provided within 15 days.

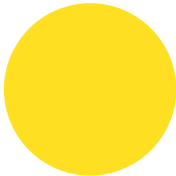
Sewer Service Connection

The connection to a sewer supply must be provided within 15 days where there is an existing infrastructure and the distance is within 90m. Alternatively, it should be provided within 30 days where there is an existing infrastructure and the distance is greater than 90m but less than 500m.

Energy efficiency tips for customers

One of the functions of the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) is to ensure the security of supply of electricity by amongst other activities, developing guidelines of efficient use of electricity.

Electricity efficiency practically means reducing electricity consumption through the use of less energy to attain the same amount of useful output. For instance, an electricity-efficient 12-Watt light-emitting diode (LED) bulb uses 75-80% less energy than a 60-Watt traditional bulb but



The use of solar panels can save up to a third on customers' electricity bills.



Customers should switch off and unplug electronic appliances, not in daily use such as hairdryers and irons after use. Appliances continue to consume electricity even when they are not turned on and a lot of energy is wasted: Also, customers should ensure that their TV sets are switched off and not just on standby –that too saps unnecessary energy.



An empty fridge wastes far more electricity than a full one because the fridge has to work harder to keep everything cool. If the food is compacted together it keeps the fridge cooler.



The oven heats every shelf regardless of whether there is food on each shelf, and so, consumers should make the most of the electricity that they use by cooking more than one meal at a time. Put differently, consumers should try to cook several meals at once. Such a practice will assist them to have different meals sorted for the rest of the week and to save electricity.



Using a big cooker ring for a tiny pan is a huge waste of electricity, as is putting a big pan on a tiny ring. When customers are cooking a small amount of food, they should ensure that only a small pan on a small ring is used.



provides the same level of light. As a result, consumers should purchase products and appliances that have green energy marks. Electronic devices with green energy marks indicate that such a device is energy efficient.

Efficient use of electricity is often perceived to be a mammoth task, which cannot be easily attained although it helps in the reduction of carbon footprints, lowers household energy expenses and enhances the quality of life. Households and businesses should practice electricity-saving practices as measures for avoiding unnecessary expenses on electricity. Here are some practical suggestions that consumers can do to save electricity:

The need for staying warm should be done bearing in mind the cost implications associated with the failure of practising energy efficiency measures. The use of less electricity means the reduction of pollution from power plants and helps in conserving natural resources. Other effects of over-consumption may lead to increased carbon footprint, climate change, reduction in supply and higher energy costs.

For more on guidelines on efficient use of electricity visit:
www.lewa.org.ls



Install ceiling fans to warm the house in winter. An important point to remember while installing fans is to set them to operate in a clockwise direction. Doing so will push warm air, which collects near the ceiling, back down into the room. If a customer does not have a ceiling fan then a regular small fan will still work.



Customers should keep their heating controls constantly low, rather than continuously turning it on and off, and would, as a result, save the energy. This is because the boiler uses a lot of electricity trying to warm to high heat after being cold, then energy is wasted when it gets too hot and needs to be cooled again. Programmable geysers are also ideal for this function.



Once a customer has finished cooking, they should open the oven door and allow the excess heat to warm up their homes instead of wasting the heat by allowing the extractor fan to whip it up to the outside.



Keeping doors closed within the house will trap the heat in each room and this means consumers will use less electricity in warming houses. Also, consumers are advised to use thick mats to block the heat from escaping through the gap underneath doors.

Water efficiency tips

One of the functions of the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) is to ensure the security of supply of water in the urban areas by amongst other activities, developing water use efficiency guidelines. Water efficiency simply refers to practices of reducing water wastage through measuring the amount of needed water for a certain purpose. Water is important to life and should be treated as such throughout the year. Water efficiency should be practiced all year round and not only during specific months.

Here are the useful water efficiency tips especially during the winter months:

Pipe freezes occur on those that are exposed to frigid temperatures such as outdoor hose bibs, and water supply lines in unheated interior areas like basements and kitchen cabinets. To reduce the likelihood of freezing, wrap water supply lines in unheated areas with insulation tubes made of polyethene or fibreglass. For an extra layer of protection, apply heat-tape before wrapping pipes with insulation.

Extremely cold temperatures in the winter start to change between the night and day resulting in expansion and contraction of pipes. At a time, thaw starts, pipes are likely to break thus causing massive non-revenue loss and high utility's costs. After the first thaw, call a plumber to walk the yard or property to inspect water lines in ensuring that there were no leaks that might have occurred over the winter.



Know the location of the property shut-off valve: During heavy leaks, the property shut-off valve can save money on water and damage repairs. The faster a customer turns off the water, the less of it goes to waste.



Dripping faucets during freezing temperatures can save the customer money on water. If a customer knows the direction travelled by water into the building, the entire water system can be pulled through by turning on faucets at the opposite ends. Keeping the water moving, greatly reduces the likelihood of freezing. For added efficiency, customers should collect the dripping water into a bucket or cup. The collected water can be used for watering house plants or flushing the toilet.

Water should be conserved throughout the year as the amount of collected water during wet seasons is not enough for human, animal and plant use. Consumers should remember that once relatively short rainy seasons end, shortage of water will still exist.

The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic also proved to the world that water is life and should, therefore, be treated as such as it is essential in eliminating COVID-19 spread.

LEWA's Tariff Filing and Review Procedure

In terms of the Lesotho Electricity Authority Act, 2002, as amended, Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) is, amongst other functions, charged with the protection of the interests of all classes of consumers as to the terms and conditions and the price of the supply of urban water and electricity services.

In the quest to realise the above, LEWA has developed regulatory tools which are used to determine tariffs and charges. The regulated utilities, namely, Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) apply for adjustments in tariffs levels whenever they deem necessary. Both LEC and WASCO, inter alia, maintain that tariffs reviews are necessary to ensure their financial sustainability in the provision of services.

Upon receipt of the Applications from either LEC or WASCO, the Authority assesses their conformity to the requirements of, amongst others, the Act, regulatory tools, the Lesotho Electricity Authority Tariff Filing and Review Procedure for Electricity and Water Tariff Applications. The procedure provides a clear, consistent set of steps to be followed by the Authority in reviewing tariff submissions and making recommendations to the Board. The Lesotho Electricity Authority Act, 2002, as amended, allows the Authority three months to finalise submitted tariff submissions. This procedure is consistent with the LEA Act 2002, as amended, LEA (Electricity Price Review and Structure) Regulations, 2009, and the Licences issued to LEC and WASCO.

This information is intended to build stakeholders' awareness on initial processes on tariffs and charges determination. Informed customers will be enabled to meaningfully make inputs into LEWA tariffs assessment and determination processes.



Mr Thuso Ntlama, LEWA's Economic Regulation Manager encouraging stakeholders to provide inputs on tariffs and charges Applications

The general requirements for assessing applications

Any tariff Application submitted to the Authority for consideration must include, or provide the following:

- ◆ A brief and precise executive summary of the Application;
- ◆ A statement (or status of the application) detailing the basis for the Application;
- ◆ All costs and revenues to be disaggregated into regulated business, non-regulated business and corporate entity;
- ◆ Regulated business for electricity must further be disaggregated into transmission, distribution and supply;
- ◆ A statement on assumptions (economic, financial, social, volumes, etc) taken into account in preparing the application;
- ◆ An explanation to all the data (amounts, statistics and volumes) supporting the application;
- ◆ Statement on the treatment of affiliate businesses and related parties (if any);
- ◆ All data (amounts and volumes) must be submitted in MS Excel format;
- ◆ All other documentation submitted must be in an agreed format between the Authority and the licensee, with a PDF submission being the official Application submission; and
- ◆ Duly filled data templates attached to the procedure.



Impact of COVID-19 on regulated water services

Water is at the core of sustainable development and is vital for attaining healthy ecosystems and maximising human survival. It is a natural resource that has to be sustainably managed as it helps in lessening risks associated with hunger and diseases.

The provision of safe water, sanitation and hygienic conditions are essential for protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks, including the COVID-19 Pandemic.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the public is urged to wash hands regularly to prevent human-to-human transmission of COVID-19. They are also urged to wear face masks, ensure social distancing and avoid physical contact with others. The Authority embraces the WHO position that water and sanitation should remain central in the fight against the Pandemic. This is done through continuous education on the efficient use of water, and the importance of paying water bills timely. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that if the water is used sparingly and customers pay their bills, customers would have access to the sustainable supply of water and promote good hygiene.

The provision of safe water, sanitation and hygienic conditions are essential for protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19 Pandemic. According to WHO, COVID-19 is an infectious disease which is spread primarily through droplets of saliva or

discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. WHO emphasises that it is crucial to practice respiratory etiquette, for example; by coughing into a flexed elbow.

[Adverse impacts brought by COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 poses challenges to global health systems as well as social and economic prospects at large. According to the World Bank, COVID-19 is expected to impact supply chains, as most textiles and apparel firms source raw materials from China, whose economy has been affected negatively by the pandemic. Lesotho being no exception, has been affected by COVID-19 as economic activities slowed down and vulnerable people were exposed to all sorts of hardships.

Looking at WASCO, which is the main utility in the urban water and sewerage services subsector, the utility could be challenged in providing customers with services on time, as most of its employees were working from home as a precautionary measure against the spread of COVID-19. The availability of some of the materials needed for making connections and other services became a challenge since almost all of them were to be imported. As a result of COVID-19, WASCO may adversely be impacted such that it may not even realise the forecasted revenue on sales as the number of new connections and consumption dropped, and many customers defaulted on payments of bills due to the economic hardships.

The Authority encourages customers to pay their water bills on time and regularly, so that WASCO may continue providing water services which are so critical for the success of national efforts of fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic. Customers should therefore pay their bills remotely where possible as part of taking responsibility to avoid unnecessary contact.