

Press Statement

Graded filling stations not prioritising consumer issues

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The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) is concerned that only 18 out of 160 graded filling stations countrywide have been scored Grade 'A' for prioritising the provision of compressed air and working toilets.

According to a nationwide inspection of Graded stations conducted by ERB at the end of 2016, a total of 114 filling stations were rated 'B', while 25 were rated 'C'. Three sites graded 'F' were recommended for closure for rating poorly.

Failure to prioritise consumer issues resulted in the majority of inspected sites being marked down for lack of compressed air and assistance to operate the equipment; lack of toilets or dirty toilets which were also generally unlabelled.

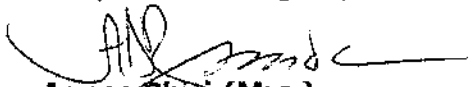
Other common shortcomings detected during the inspections were the absence of additional services such as windscreen cleaning, oil checks, failure to acknowledge or direct traffic at the forecourt and general lack of courtesy when serving motorists.

Under phase one, the grading system initially focused on technical issues while under the revised criteria, filling stations are expected to provide ancillary services.

Previously, the grading system focused on safety and product quality requirements whose weighted scores accounted for 70% and 30%, respectively. However, the revised scoring criteria allocated 32 points out of 60 to Consumer Services. In addition, the requirements by other regulatory agencies such as the Zambia Weights and Measures Agency also have an impact on the grades awarded to the erring filling stations.

The revised guidelines are intended to motivate Oil Marketing Companies and dealers to improve on the quality of customer service being provided to consumers. Motorists are therefore encouraged to check on the rating of a filling station before buying fuel as the highest rated ("A") filling stations are certified to provide better value for money.

The ERB is therefore encouraging members of the public to report anomalies or complaints relating to provision of ancillary services on the Toll Free Line 8484.



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***BACKGROUND NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

- The ERB introduced the Service Station Grading Scoring Criteria in October 2014 to:
 - inform all stakeholders (especially consumers) about the state of infrastructure at service stations from where they purchase fuel.
 - motivate licensed companies to improve the state of infrastructure at their respective stations.
- Phase one of the programme focused on the technical state of infrastructure only.
- In 2016, the grading system was revised to address broader customer expectations.
- The grading system letters "A" to "C" and "F" are prominently displayed besides the price chart at filling stations.
- The guiding standard is the Zambian Standard 385 Part 3: THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY: The installation of underground storage tanks, pumps/dispensers and pipework at service stations and consumer installations – Code of Practice.
- The compliance rating for a filling station is interpreted as follows:

Grade	Colour	Criteria score	Interpretation
A	Green	95 – 100% compliance rate	Very Good
B	Yellow	80 – 94% compliance rate	Good
C	Blue	60 – 93% compliance rate	Fair
F	Red	Below 59% – Failed & closed filling station	Closed