

## § 602.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply to Part 602, Consumer Relations, and Part 603, Service Standards Applicable to Telephone Corporations:

(a) Service Provider - A telephone corporation certified in New York State with the authority and tariff to provide local exchange service using either its own or leased facilities.

(b) Basic Local Service - The provision of access to: one party line service, local/toll calling, local usage, tone dialing, emergency services, assistance services, telecommunications relay services, directory listings, privacy protections and non-published service associated with the public switched network.

(c) Local Exchange Service - Any form of switched telecommunications provided within a defined geographic area known as the local calling area.

(d) Customer Service Center - Any functional entity where consumers can initiate communication with the service provider for installation, billing, repair, operator and other services.

(e) Access Line - A telecommunications channel of varying size with an associated telephone number.

(f) Business Office - Any functional entity which accepts service orders, billing inquiries and/or provides consumer information.

(g) Repair Office - Any functional entity which receives trouble reports.

(h) Trouble - A trouble is an impairment of the telephone network, or a deviation from its design specifications.

(i) Customer Trouble Report - The record of when the repair office personnel receives notification of a trouble or perceived trouble by a subscriber, third party, or employee acting as a subscriber or when other employees receive notification of a trouble or perceived trouble by a subscriber, third party, or employee acting as a subscriber and refers the report to the repair office.

(j) Initial Report - The first customer trouble report associated with a specific trouble for which there is no pending report.

(k) Out-Of-Service - A classification of a trouble report where the customer indicates either: (1) an inability to complete incoming or outgoing calls; or (2) the presence of interference which causes connected calls to be incomprehensible. Other service difficulties (slow dial tone, busy circuits, etc.) shall not be considered out-of-service conditions.

(l) Service Affecting - All trouble reports not categorized as out-of-service will be considered service affecting.

(m) Final Trunk Group - The last choice group of common interoffice communications channels for the routing of local, operator and/or toll calls.

(n) Operator Assistance - The act of providing a consumer with help in placing a call including collect, third party billed, person-to-person and emergency calls.

(o) Answer - The point in time when a call has been delivered to a representative who is ready to render assistance and/or accept the information necessary to process the call. An acknowledgment that the customer is on the line does not constitute an answer.

(p) Subsequent Report - Any customer trouble report that is received prior to the closing of its associated initial report.

## § 602.2 General Provisions

As indicated by their wording, a number of regulations in this Part prescribe the normal procedures and practices to be directed in good faith by the service provider. However, the regulations in this Part are not intended to govern the implementation of such procedures in individual instances. The execution or nonexecution of such procedures and practices in individual instances is not the sole indicator of whether the service provider has provided adequate service to a particular consumer or group of consumers.

## § 602.3 Customer Service Centers

(a) Service providers shall ensure that customers have convenient access, by a toll free telephone number or in person, to customer service centers.

(b) In instances where automated responses are used to handle billing or repair issues, service providers shall configure their menu system such that a consumer is able to be routed to a representative for billing or repair issues within 60 seconds from the time the automated response begins. In addition, service providers may use additional means of access (e.g., the Internet) that are not subject to this provision.

(c) Service providers shall provide notice to their customers and to the public as to the means of contacting their customer service centers by notice on the bill and other appropriate means.

(d) Customer service centers ordinarily shall be accessible to consumers during the normal working hours in the community being served and at such other times and in such other places as may be warranted in Sections 602.6(d) and 602.7(b).

(e) Service providers shall strive to provide trained and qualified customer contact personnel.

#### § 602.4 Public Information

Access to the following information shall be made available upon request:

(a) Rate information applicable to the area served by the service provider, as provided by Part 630 of this title.

(b) Where a provider's rates are based upon rate area boundaries, maps, listings or other formats used by the provider showing rate area boundaries sufficiently detailed that mileage or zone charge can be determined.

(c) Information pertaining to changes in services and rates as proposed in an informational filing or a pending tariff or rate filing.

(d) Upon receipt of a request from a consumer for copies of the above described information, the service provider will provide a single copy of the information requested, up to 25 pages, without charge.

#### § 602.5 Service Orders

(a) Service providers shall receive and respond to applications for tariffed services in a timely manner. Upon the request of a consumer, each service provider shall provide an explanation of the rates, charges and provisions applicable to the services available, respond to questions the consumer may have, and provide additional appropriate information to assist the consumer in obtaining the communication service(s) that meet the consumer's needs.

(b) Where special charges for extraordinary construction, maintenance, replacement costs, expenses or overtime work are not specifically set forth in a service provider's tariff, the consumer will be advised of the options available. If the service provider is to perform any such work for a special charge, the service provider shall offer the customer the option of accepting a good faith estimate of the charge to be levied, or of being billed on an actual cost basis. Once an estimate is accepted by the customer it will become binding on both parties, and the customer pays the estimated charge whether the actual cost is greater or less than the estimate.

(c) Service providers shall notify customers of connection fees and provide an estimated first bill, not reflecting usage charges, prior to processing the customer's request.

(d) Each service provider shall inform new residential customers of a 60 day grace period whereby such consumer may select a different type of basic local flat rate service or basic local measured rate service from that provider without incurring any additional connection or installation charges for basic local service. A grace period applies only when the consumer actually incurred an installation charge for basic local service.

(e) (1) Normally, the service provider shall offer a consumer applying for its initial basic local exchange service an installation appointment interval (e.g., the period of time that a premise visit is to take place) within five working days.

(2) After such an offer, the consumer may nonetheless agree to other terms that better meet the needs of the consumer and the provider (e.g. installation appointments for either morning or afternoon).

(3) Prior to an appointment, arrangements to access a necessary third party's premises shall be discussed with the consumer.

(f) Normally, when a service provider cannot meet a commitment date to complete an order, the provider shall make a reasonable effort to advise the applicant of the reason for the delay, and probable date service will be provided.

#### § 602.6 Billing

(a) Service providers shall clearly list all charges and credits on customers' bills, which shall be issued monthly unless provided otherwise by tariff. Local service charges may be billed one month in advance and may be listed as a single flat fee. All toll charges shall be itemized to allow consumer identification unless provided otherwise by tariff.

(b) Credit shall be granted for any call for which a charge applies when the consumer has reported that a wrong number was reached or for that portion of a call the consumer has reported as inadequate for communication, unless there is reason to believe that an adequate connection to the desired party was effected.

(c) Service providers shall require that agents authorized to receive bill payments on their behalf normally mail or report consumers' payments within one business day.

(d) Service providers shall have a representative available for the purpose of explaining charges on bills and to adjust bill errors.

(e) Upon reasonable consumer request, each service provider shall provide itemized statements of charges, if feasible, and if a customer disputes a bill, available call detail bill information shall be provided at no charge. However, requests for detailed bill information normally bulk billed may be provided at an additional charge pursuant to tariff.

#### § 602.7 Consumer Complaints and Trouble Reports

(a) Service providers shall provide full and prompt investigation of complaints, oral or written, received either through normal reporting channels or through the Commission, and appropriate responses shall be made with respect to complaints.

(b) Service providers shall have a representative available to receive customer trouble reports at all hours.

(c) Troubles of an emergency nature shall be cleared at all hours, consistent with the bona fide needs of consumers and the personal safety of service provider personnel.

(d) All other out-of-service troubles not requiring unusual repairs shall normally be cleared within 24 hours excluding Sundays and holidays.

(e) Commitments made with consumers should be kept. In the event of unavoidable change by the service provider, such as if unusual repairs are required, or rehabilitation programs or other factors preclude clearing of reported trouble promptly, reasonable attempts shall be made to notify the customer as to when the trouble will be cleared.

(f) During major service outages of extended duration, the service provider shall make every effort to inform the general public of the details of the outage, including the areas affected and a schedule for expected service restoral. Whenever reasonable and practical, affected offices shall be intercepted and callers advised that a service outage has taken place, in accordance with accepted industry standards.

(g) All local service providers shall assist consumers reporting obscene, threatening or harassing calls, to help in eliminating such calls.

#### § 602.8 Operator Services

(a) Each service provider shall provide access from its exchanges at all hours to local assistance operators who shall be capable of connecting calls to appropriate emergency services and/or other operator services normally provided by local exchange companies or their designees, if the service provider is responsible for handling the call.

(b) All telephone corporations, either individually or in concert with other telephone corporations operating within the State, shall be responsible for insuring the provision of a relay system to enable communications between persons with hearing or speech disabilities, who use non-voice terminal devices, and persons of normal hearing and or speech who use

conventional telephones. The system shall operate on a 24-hour basis. All telephone corporations shall provide annual notice to advise customers of this service. Pertinent information regarding the relay system shall be included in telephone directories.

(c) All service providers shall provide network overflow to local operators on all originating trunking that carries emergency calls destined for Enhanced 911 emergency report centers. Each such call overflowing to the operator shall be identified as an emergency call, and the operator shall have Automatic Number Identification on the telephone line used by the calling party. As an alternative to provision of overflow to the operator on an originating basis, service providers may install originating trunking from end offices to Enhanced 911 emergency report centers in such a manner that blocking on such trunks is engineered for less than half the normal blocking design of the public switched network. On a terminating basis from the last central office to the emergency report center, overflow to the operator (including Automatic Number Identification and an indication that the call was originally destined for an emergency center) shall always be provided.

#### § 602.9 Intercept

(a) Intercept shall consist of operator intercept or a suitable recorded announcement, providing sufficient information to callers to indicate the reasons for being intercepted as well as directions to assist them in completing the call.

(b) The service provider shall normally provide intercept service for the following minimum periods:

(1) In case of a customer-initiated residence number change, either sixty days or the remaining life of the normal alphabetical directory (including local directories), published by the serving service provider or on its behalf, in which the old number appears plus thirty days, whichever is shorter.

(2) In case of customer-initiated business number change, either sixty days or the remaining life of the normal alphabetical directory (including local directories), published by the serving service provider or on its behalf in which the old number appears plus thirty days, whichever is shorter.

(3) In case of a company-initiated number change, one hundred and eighty days or the remaining life of the normal alphabetical directory (including local directories), published by the serving service provider or on its behalf, in which the old number appears plus thirty days, whichever is longer. If at the time of change the new number is noted in all of the aforementioned current directories, intercept will be provided for thirty days.

(c) Service providers shall strive to update intercept records within 24 hours of a number change.

(d) Each service provider shall provide intercept on calls to non-working numbers, codes, vacant levels, etc., where reasonable and practical.

(e) The local service provider shall not impose charges for intercepted calls.

#### § 602.10 Directories

(a) All service providers shall publish directories, or cause their numbers to be published. Directories shall be regularly published at approximately yearly intervals. The interval between directories shall not exceed 15 months without express Commission approval. The form of directories shall ordinarily conform to the following criteria:

(1) A directory shall be in such form and list such information, as will permit the numbers of local exchange customers in the area covered by the directory to be obtained, except for public telephones and numbers unlisted at a customer's request.

(2) Information pertaining to emergency calls to such agencies as the police and fire departments shall appear conspicuously in the opening pages of the directory.

(3) Instructions concerning the placing of local and long distance calls, shall appear conspicuously in the opening pages of the directory. This section shall include access codes that can be used for placement of long distance calls, for those interexchange carriers agreeing to have their codes published. Directories will also include a telephone number for contacting each local service provider that serves the area covered by the directory at no additional cost to the service provider being listed.

(4) The introduction to the directory shall instruct customers to call the local service provider from which they receive service for information on billing, party lines, annoyance call procedures, emergency calling procedures and how to obtain tariff information.

(b) Each service provider shall distribute at no charge to its customers within a local exchange area, a copy of the local exchange directory for that area, and one additional copy shall be provided for each working telephone number upon request. A copy shall be filed with the Commission.

(c) A service provider shall furnish its directory databases to all directory assistance service providers on terms and conditions no less favorable than the service provider furnishes such databases to its own or affiliated directory assistance service operations.

(d) In the event of an error in a number published in the directory, the service provider shall intercept calls to the published number for the life of the directory where such number is not already in service. Where the published number is in service, the party served by it shall be given appropriate transfer information, and also the opportunity for a number change (at no charge). In that event, the normal practice shall be to place the published number on intercept, for the life of the directory listing plus 30 days.

(e) Reasonable advance notice shall normally be given to the consumers affected when a service provider has cause to change a large group of numbers, even if such changes coincide with a directory issuance.