

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 24/2013)

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

TRAI releases Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) (Amendment) Regulations, 2013 dated 25th March, 2013”.

New Delhi, 25th March, 2013: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today issued the “Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) (Amendment) Regulations, 2013” amending the framework for audit of the metering and billing system of service providers provided in the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2006, so as to protect the interest of consumers.

2. The regulations issued in 2006 have prescribed a Code of Practice for metering and billing accuracy, containing standards for metering and billing, which every access service provider has to comply, so as to minimize the incidences of billing complaints and for protecting the interest of consumers. These regulations also provided for a system of annual audit of the metering and billing system through any one of the auditors, from the panel notified by TRAI, and the service providers are required to submit Audit Report by 30th June of every year and Action Taken Report on the inadequacies, if any, pointed out by the Auditor by 30th September. TRAI had issued a Consultation Paper on 27th November, 2012, seeking the comments of stakeholders on the proposals to introduce financial disincentives for addressing the problem of delay in submission of audit reports and action taken reports, false or incomplete audit and action taken reports and delayed refund of overcharges to affected consumers and proposals for improvement of quality of audit. Open House Discussions were held in Delhi on 9th January, 2013. After considering the views received from the stakeholders during the consultation process, TRAI has issued the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing

Accuracy) (Amendment) Regulations, 2013. The salient features of these regulations are given below:

- a. Service providers to get its metering and billing system audited annually for basic and cellular mobile telephone service in each service area through any one of the auditor from the panel notified by TRAI.
- b. Audit of call data records of one month of sample subscribers from most popular plans, new plans, data plans and Special Tariff Vouchers, in each Quarter so that the audit is representative of the whole year and also to facilitate timely refund of overcharged amounts.
- c. Submission of audit report and action taken report by service providers to TRAI every year by 31st July and 15th November respectively.
- d. Financial disincentive at the rate of Rs.1,00,000/- per week for delay in submission of Audit Reports and Action Taken Reports by the service providers.
- e. Financial disincentive not exceeding Rs.10,00,000/- per Action Taken Report for false or incomplete information in the Action Taken Report.
- f. In all cases of overcharging established during audit the affected customers shall be refunded of the overcharged amounts within two months, failing which the service provider shall be liable for financial disincentive equivalent to the amount of overcharged amount.
- g. Auditors to submit monthly progress report to TRAI on refund of overcharged amounts to affected customers, in addition to submission of report on progress of audit at periodic intervals.

3. The full text of the regulations is available on TRAI's website (www.traigov.in). For any further clarifications please contact Mr. A. Robert J. Ravi, Advisor (QOS) on 011-23230404.

Rajeev Agrawal
Secretary, TRAI