

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG)

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Comments on consultation paper on compensation to consumers in the event of dropped calls

Q.1 Do you agree that calling consumers should not be charged for a call that got dropped within five seconds? In addition, if the call gets dropped any time after five seconds, the last pulse of the call (minute/second), which got dropped, should not be charged. Please support your viewpoint with reasons along with the methodologies for implementation.

Ans. Yes, we fully agree with both the points.

As mentioned in the paper, call drops not only annoy consumers but they also result in the consumer paying more. Apart from the fact that for a person who is on a per-minute-pulse, who will have to pay for the minute even if his call drops after one second, there is every possibility that the consumer might re-attempt the call since it got disrupted midway. And during the second call, he might be apologizing, berating about the call interruption, starting the conversation from the beginning once again and so on, thus resulting in longer call duration and ensuing greater monetary loss.

As is existing, default technological solutions should be integrated into the system in order to ensure that there is accountability. Immediately after a call drop, message to the consumer stating how many minutes he had spoken, when call dropped and for how many minutes/seconds he was liable to pay, may be sent. This should be for both pre-paid and post-paid consumers.

Q2: Do you agree that calling consumers should be compensated for call drops by the access service providers? If yes, which of the following methods would be appropriate for compensating the consumers upon call drop?

- (i) Credit of talk-time in minutes/ seconds
- (ii) Credit of talk-time in monetary terms
- (iii) Any other method you may like to suggest

Please support your viewpoint with reasons along with the methodologies for implementation.

Ans.: Yes, we do agree

Talk time in minutes/seconds may be credited to the consumers account. This information may be sent along with the message about the call drop or as a second message after the initial communication about the call drop (to both, pre-paid and post paid consumers). Also, there should be no cap, i.e., there should not be any condition like it should be used within a day or only within subscribers of same TSP, as there are no conditions when a call drop happens - it could be during any call, to any one, at any time and may happen any number of times during the day.

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Q3: If the answer to Q2 is in the affirmative, suggest conditions/limits, if any, which should be imposed upon the provision of crediting talk-time upon call drop and usage thereof.

Ans.: Since this is about compensation for call drops, it should be uniform and based on minute back guarantee.

Q4: Is there any other relevant issue which should be considered in the present consultation on the issue of call drops?

Ans.: If, for a particular individual, there are call drops for a specified number of times during the month – say, 20 and above, then, there should be provision for additional compensation, monetary or otherwise, that will act as a detriment and will help improve the system.