

F.No.303-6/2006-QOS
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
A-2/14, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi – 110 029

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Dated _____

To

All Cellular Mobile Service Providers
All Unified Access Service Providers
All Basic Service Providers

Subject: Draft Direction on issue of Docket Number for customer complaints and termination of service.

1. The Authority has received complaints from consumers expressing concern regarding their inability to correlate their previous interaction with the customer care helpline as service providers do not give any identification number for the calls made to the customer care helpline and in many cases they do not keep a record of the interaction with the customer and action agreed in their Customer Relationship Management system. The Authority has also received a number of complaints from consumers regarding raising of bills by some of the service providers ever after a request is made for termination of service. According to these complaints, the service providers do not implement the request for termination of service until all the dues are settled. In some of the cases where the customer had gone out of service area on roaming the settlement of the dues may take a longer time. Meanwhile the service providers continue to raise bills for rental etc. even if the phone is not used. There has also been complaints that the customer is forced to pay pending bills or bills generated after his request for termination of service even if the service provider has the security deposit of the customer with him and the bill amount is lower than the security deposit. Also in some cases the service providers accept request for termination of service only in writing.

2. The customers face inconveniences on account of the inability of the service provider to generate and settle the bills instantly on receipt of the request for termination of service. The risk to the operator is similar whether a person is an

existing customer or a former customer and also the legal remedies available to the operator for recovery of dues are similar. As such, non-termination of service pending settlement of dues is against the interest of the consumer and also gives unfair advantage to the operator by way of rent etc. even if the customer is not using the service. The practice of forcing the consumers to pay pending bills when such bills could be secured under the security deposit of the consumer is also against consumer interest. The service providers obtain the consent of the customers for the provision of various value added services through SMS, e-mail, fax, telephone calls etc. As a matter of convenience to the customers, since all the service providers do not have the necessary infrastructure in all the places for the consumers to go and personally request for any service or for making complaints, these mediums should also be available to the consumers for placing any request or for seeking clarifications or for making a complaint. Easy identification of various service requests/ clarifications/ complaints made by consumers through unique docket numbers would benefit both the consumer and the service provider in addressing consumer grievances smoothly and efficiently.

3. In view of the above, in the consumer's interest, the Authority in exercise of its power conferred upon it under Section 13 read with Section 11(1)(b)(i) and (v) of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, hereby directs all the Cellular Mobile Service Providers, Basic Service Operators and Unified Access Service Providers (i) to assign a unique docket number for all calls made to the customer care helpline numbers and special numbers for registering complaint and convey the same to the customer at the time of such call; (ii) to adjust the security deposit against any pending bills or outstanding dues at the time of request for termination of service; and (iii) to terminate the service within 24 hours of the receipt of a request for termination of service, which may be made through SMS, e-mail, fax, etc.

This issues with the approval of the Authority.

(S.N. Gupta)
Prin. Advisor (QOS)