

## **Comments on Issues relating to blocking of IMEI for lost /stolen mobile handsets**

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### **1) In order to reduce/discourage mobile theft do you think the blocking of IMEI is an effective solution? Please give reasons**

Yes , blocking of IMEI is an effective solution to discourage mobile theft .The reason is:

- a) It is almost impossible to recover a stolen mobile in the present scenario. Even if an FIR is lodged , practically it is of no use , seeing the recovery rate of stolen mobile handsets . Though it's a law and order problem , existing system is unable to control theft cases of mobile handset .So to ensure the safety of the mobile handsets , we need an alternate system through which theft cases of mobile handsets can be discouraged.
- b) Once fool proof system will be in place , the incident of mobile theft will automatically go down and over a period of time , will get stopped once people will come to know that stolen mobile handset is of no use.
- c) Once IMEI number will become important and people will be informed , it will discourage grey market handsets which often doesn't come with valid IMEI number.
- d) It will be good for national security too.

### **2) In case blocking of IMEI is implemented, to what extent load on the network will increase? Please give details**

The load on network will not increase much .Checking of authenticity of IMEI number is not required during each call processing . Instead it should be done during registering of SIM card in the network when mobile handset is switched on. Further ,the servers placed in different zones will share the load .These servers will do mirroring of data at the regular interval to come into synchronization with one centralized main sever .

### **3) In your opinion who should maintain the CEIR? Please give Reasons**

It should be maintained by either DOT itself or by a third party under vigilance of DOT . This activity needs to bring all telecom operators into one platform , so an agency with sufficient authority only will be able to do this . To ensure that people will start using it , process should be hassle free and to develop faith on the new system it should be fool proof , specially in the beginning . There should be strict provision of fine on the telecom operators , who do not abide by the guidelines to work system efficiently. This can be done by a Government body only .

**4) Should the CEIR be maintained at national level or zonal level? Provide details including the estimated data size**

There should be one centralized server which should have replica server at each zone . Now advance technology like mirroring is in place , so the idea of maintaining CEIR at zonal level will be good , specially to reduce the load at one central server .These CEIR at every zone will do mirroring at regular interval to come into synchronization . This technique will ensure that there is no mismatch of data and data related to all the stolen handsets is available at every server .

**5) Please comment on cost and funding aspects of Centralized EIR ? Please provide detailed cost estimates?**

Charge can be recovered from mobile handset companies and telecom operators ,who may in turn charge it from customers for being the ultimate beneficiary of the new system in place . Cost will not be much keeping in view the mobile subscriber base in India . Cost of the project should be recovered from mobile handset companies and telecom operators based on the actual number of customers they have .

**6) Should blocking of IMEI /ESN be chargeable from customer? If yes, what should be the charge?**

Mobile handset companies may charge this amount from customers as one time charge during purchase of handset itself . While telecom operators may charge one time fee during activation of new number or they may charge some nominal amounts like 50 paise or 1 Rs every month . People will not mind paying such less amount for the benefit they will enjoy. If it will be charged one time it will appear big amount also it will not be enough to support the operating cost of the system keeping in view the less incidence of theft cases.

**7) Please give your views on bringing a legislation to prevent reprogramming of mobile devices? In your opinion what are the aspects that need to be covered under such legislation?**

Reprogramming of IMEI number should be banned .

The other aspects which needs to be covered under this legislation is :

- a) A mobile handset with only a valid IMEI number should be allowed to work in telecom network . So there is need to ban mobile handsets which do not carry valid IMEI number . Much has been discussed in this regard ,now its time to go for implementation . It will also check revenue leakage in terms of taxes and also security threats to country .

- b) To further check it , CEIR should have record of all the valid IMEI numbers of mobile handsets in use .

**8) What should be the procedure for blocking the IMEI?**

The customer whose mobile handset is stolen, should first report the incidence to police . Then he/she should approach respective telecom service provider's authorized representative , along with original invoice copy of mobile handset in which IMEI number is clearly mentioned and a copy of FIR . Once the telecom service provider's representative is fully satisfied about the reported incidence he will initiate process for the blocking of the mobile hand set.

This process will have two benefits :

- a) It will discourage buying of handsets from grey market because it will not have valid IMEI number .
- b) Genuine person only can initiate the process .

**9) If lost mobile is found, should there be a facility of unblocking the IMEI number? If yes, what should be the process for it? Should there be a time limit for unblocking the IMEI number? Should it be chargeable?**

Yes , otherwise it will have no meaning . People will even try to return stolen mobile handsets when it will be discovered that it has no use for them .To unblock handsets same criteria as blocking should be followed i.e. authenticity should be ensured .To encourage the use of the system , process should be made hassle free .Once customer fulfill all the requisite criteria , it should be unblocked within 48 hr time . Facility can be charged some nominal amount say rupees 100 or 200.