

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 21 August, 2014

F. No. 305-01/2014-QoS----- In exercise of the powers conferred upon it under section 36, read with sub-clauses (i) and (v) of clause (b), of sub-section (1) of section 11 of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (24 of 1997), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India hereby makes the following regulations further to amend the Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations, 2009 (7 of 2009), namely: -

**THE STANDARDS OF QUALITY OF SERVICE OF BASIC TELEPHONE SERVICE
(WIRELINE) AND CELLULAR MOBILE TELEPHONE SERVICE (THIRD AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS, 2014 (12 OF 2014)**

1. (1) These regulations may be called the Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2014.

(2) They shall come into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. In regulation 3 of the Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations, 2009 (7 of 2009) (hereinafter referred to as the principal regulations), in sub-regulation (1), in the table, -

(a) under the column 'Benchmark', ---

(i) against serial number (i), for the character and figure " ≤ 5 ", the character and figure " ≤ 7 ", shall be substituted;

(ii) against serial number (ii), ---

(A) under the heading "For urban areas", for the words, character and figures "By next working day: ≥ 90% and within 3 days: 100%", the character, figures and words "By next working day: ≥ 85% and within five days: 100%" shall be substituted;

(B) under the heading "For rural and hilly areas", for the words, character and figures "By next working day: ≥ 90% and within 5 days: 100%", the characters, figures and words "By next working day: ≥ 75% and within 7 days: 100%" shall be substituted;

(iii) against serial number (iii), for the character, figure and letters " ≤ 8 Hrs", the character, figure and letters " ≤ 10 hours" shall be substituted;

(iv) (a) against serial number (viii), for the figures, character and words "100% within 4 weeks", the figures, character and words " ≥ 98% within four weeks and 100% within six weeks" shall be substituted;


(b) against serial number (iv), the entries appearing under the columns 'Name of Parameter', 'Benchmark', and 'Averaged over a period' shall be deleted;

(c) against serial number (x), ---

(i) under the column 'Name of Parameter', in parameter (b), for the figure and word "60 seconds", the words "ninety seconds" shall be substituted;

(ii) against parameter (b), under the column 'Benchmark', for the character and figures " ≥ 90%", the character and figures " ≥ 95%" shall be substituted;

3. In regulation 5 of the principal regulations, in sub-regulation (1), in the table, ---


सुधीर गुप्ता/SUDHIR GUPTA
सचिव/Secretary
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
नई दिल्ली-110002/New Delhi-110002

(a) against serial number (vii), under the column 'Benchmark', for the figure, character and words "100% within 4 weeks", the figure, character and words " ≥ 98% within four weeks and 100% within six weeks" shall be substituted;

(b) against serial number (viii), ---

(i) under the column 'Name of Parameter', in parameter (b), for the figure and words "60 seconds", the words "ninety seconds" shall be substituted;

(ii) under the column 'Benchmark', against parameter (b), for the characters and figure " ≥ 90%", the characters and figure " ≥ 95%" shall be substituted;


सुधीर गुप्ता/SUDHIR GUPTA (Sudhir Gupta)
सचिव/Secretary
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
नई दिल्ली-110002/New Delhi-110002
Secretary

Note.1. —The principal regulations were published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 20th March, 2009 vide notification number No. 305-25/2008-QoS dated the 20th March, 2009.

Note.2. —The principal regulations were amended by issuing The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Amendment) Regulations, 2012 (10 of 2012) dated 7th May, 2012.

Note.3. —The principal regulations were further amended by issuing The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2012 (24 of 2012) dated 8th November, 2012.

Note.4. —The Explanatory Memorandum explains the objects and reasons of the "Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2014.

Explanatory Memorandum

1. TRAI has issued benchmarks for various parameters pertaining to wire line services being provided to telecom customers by telecom service providers(TSPs) under the Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations, 2009 (7 of 2009). These parameters have been decided through a consultation process, taking various factors into the consideration. These regulations were further amended by "The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (Amendment) Regulations, 2012" on 7th May 2012 to address the Quality of Service requirements for 3G mobile services. The Authority, through the second amendment to these regulations issued on 8th November, 2012 has prescribed the financial disincentives to be imposed on TSPs for not meeting the benchmarks specified, delay or failure in submission of reports and in case of false reporting.

2. The Authority is monitoring the compliance to these benchmarks by various TSPs on periodic basis and has been imposing financial disincentives wherever there had been failure to comply with the benchmarks by various TSPs. From the monitoring of performance of basic TSPs, TRAI has observed that compliance with the benchmarks for the parameters relating to fault incidences, fault repair and response time to the customer for assistance have been a problem area for these operators. Though TRAI has been pursuing with these TSPs to improve their performances, there have been representations from these TSPs to the Authority expressing their inability and practical difficulties in achieving the prescribed benchmarks and requesting the Authority to review the benchmark for some of the parameters.

3. Some of the practical difficulties mentioned by these TSPs include frequent damage to the underground cables due to large scale developmental activities by various civic agencies throughout the country; theft of cables, Pillars and Distribution Points by anti-social elements; delay in restoration of these cable faults due to delay in Right of way (ROW) permission from the civic agencies; old cables like paper core, low insulation problem in jelly filled cables, with multiple joints resulting in service deterioration ; corrosion of cables in coastal areas; law and order problems in some of the areas; and frequent landslides in hilly areas. Other difficulties mentioned by them includes faults due to natural calamities, floods, denial of permission for digging the roads during monsoon season; in some cases due to non-availability of customers in the premises during office hours, the indoor faults persists; in the event of major cable breakdowns, the complaint center is flooded with calls resulting in delayed response.

4. With this background, the Authority is of the opinion that the Quality of services parameters require rationalization, striking a balance with the problems faced by TSPs to ensure better compliance from them and the need to ensure quality of service to wireline customers. After discussing the issue with the service providers, the Authority issued a consultation paper on 21st May 2014 seeking comments from various stakeholders. The stakeholders were requested to send their comments on the consultation paper. The consultation paper and comments received from stake holders were published on website of TRAI.

5. After careful examination of the comments received from various stakeholders on the consultation paper, the Authority observed that the benchmarks for some of the Quality of service parameters are under the control of TSPs and with concerted efforts, the prescribed benchmark can be achieved. However, for some of the parameters, there could be practical and genuine difficulties in achieving the benchmarks as discussed below:

6. **Quality of Service (QoS) Parameters for Basic Telephone Service (Wireline)**

6.1 **Fault incidences (No. of faults/100 subscribers/ month):**

The existing benchmark is $\leq 5\%$. Some service providers have sought to relax it to $\leq 8\%$ and some of them have sought to relax it to $\leq 10\%$. The Authority examined this and felt that the difficulties being faced by the TSPs as mentioned in para 3 especially frequent

cable faults due to various development works, cable thefts, pillar thefts and DP thefts are beyond the control of the TSPs. The Authority, after considering the practical difficulties in achieving the benchmarks and the performance of service providers, has decided to rationalise the benchmark to $\leq 7\%$.

6.2 **Fault Repair by next working day:**

The existing Benchmarks are--

For urban areas: By next working day: $\geq 90\%$ and within 3 days: 100%; and **for rural and hilly areas:** By next working day: $\geq 90\%$ and within 5 days: 100%;

In addition to the issues mentioned in para.3, most of the service providers have expressed that working hours for field staff are limited to 5 O'clock in the evening and the work for next day resumes at 10 O'clock in the morning and therefore faults booked during this period are difficult to be attended within the next working day. This will also accumulate the number of faults for further rectification. In some of the cases, the TSPs have stated that for attending indoor faults (within the premises), the non-availability of customers in the premises during office hours pose a challenge. The TSPs have also represented that in some cases the rectification of fault within the prescribed time limit is beyond their control. Most of the service providers have requested to relax the benchmarks as:

For urban areas: By next working day: $\geq 70\%$; within 3 days: 90%; and within 7 days: 100%;

For rural and hilly areas: By next working day: $\geq 70\%$; within 3 days: 80%; within 5 days: 90%; and within 15 days: 100%;

The Authority after considering the submissions of the TSPs, practical difficulties in achieving the benchmarks, the performance of TSPs and keeping in view the interests of consumers, has decided to rationalize the benchmarks as below:

For urban areas: By next working day: $\geq 85\%$; and 100% within 5 days.

For rural and hilly areas: By next working day: $\geq 75\%$; and within 7 days: 100%;

Keeping in mind the interest of consumers, while rationalising these benchmarks, TRAI has not made any change to the rent rebate allowed to consumers under these regulations.

6.3 **Mean Time to Repair (MTTR):**

The existing benchmark for mean time to repair is ≤ 8 Hrs. Most of the TSPs have requested relaxing the benchmark to ≤ 12 Hrs. Considering the difficulties being faced by the service provider in rectifying cable fault due to various development civil works, cable thefts, delay in obtaining permission to work at site by civic agencies, non-availability of customers in their premises (for attending indoor faults) and delay in procurement of material etc. and in view of the revised benchmarks for fault repair, the Authority has decided to rationalise the benchmark to ≤ 10 Hrs.

6.4 **(a) Call Completion Rate within a local network shall be better than $\geq 55\%$ or (b) Answer to Seizure Ratio (ASR) should be $\geq 75\%$:**

It is noted that most of the wireline exchanges of various TSPs have sufficient capacity because of the exponential rise in the mobile subscription. During the monitoring of quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports it has been observed that there has been no default by any TSPs. Therefore, the Authority has decided that that these parameters shall be monitored by TSPs, but not be mandated for reporting to TRAI.

7. **Quality of Service (QoS) Parameters for both, Basic services (wireline) and cellular mobile telephone services:**

7.1 **Resolution of billing/charging complaints:**

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सुधीर गुप्ता / SUDHIR GUPTA
सचिव / Secretary
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The existing benchmark for this parameter is 100% of the complaints to be resolved within 4 weeks. During consultation process, TSPs had suggested that this parameter may be revised to 95% within 4 weeks and 100% within 8 weeks. They have emphasized that there might be some stray cases where due to unforeseen reasons there might be delay in resolution of complaints beyond 4 weeks and hence the benchmark of 100% could not be achieved in some instances. The Authority after considering the views of service providers has decided to rationalize the benchmark to $\geq 98\%$ within 4 weeks and 100% within 6 weeks, providing leverage for unforeseen cases.

7.2 Response time to the customer for assistance, (b) Percentage of calls answered by the operators (voice to voice) within 60 seconds:

The existing benchmark for this parameter is $\geq 90\%$. Some of the TSPs had suggested reducing the benchmark to $\geq 60\%$, on the lines of broadband benchmarks; whereas some TSPs requested for relaxing it to $\geq 80\%$. There was also a suggestion to revise the parameter as "Percentage of calls answered by the operators (voice to voice) within 90 seconds". The major reason attributed by the TSPs for revising the benchmark for this parameter is because of the many fold increase in call volumes because of increase in customer base. Hence, the TSPs are finding it difficult to respond to the customer for assistance by answering within 60 seconds.

The Authority, after considering the views of stakeholders, has felt that this parameter is very critical for consumer satisfaction and it is largely within the control of the TSPs to achieve the benchmark by augmenting the customer care resources. Considering the level of customer satisfaction with the help services, the Authority has decided to revise the parameter as "Percentage of calls answered by the operators (voice to voice) within 90 seconds" with a more stringent benchmark $\geq 95\%$. The Authority feels that this will ensure that both the interests of TSPs and consumers are met.


सुधीर गुप्ता / SUDHIR GUPTA
सचिव / Secretary
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
नई दिल्ली-110002 / New Delhi-110002