

**Date sent:**

Friday, June 14, 2013

**Subject:**

FCC Adopts a comprehensive Reform Order to Improve Video Relay Service

On June 10, 2013, the FCC released a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) adopting new rules to improve the quality of and enhance the sustainability and integrity of the Video Relay Service (VRS) program. The Order takes a number of actions to restructure the VRS program, including steps that will ensure the interoperability and portability of video equipment used by VRS callers, promote off-the-shelf video technology in the VRS environment, and improve VRS quality and protections for consumers who use VRS. For example, the Order shortens the time in which VRS calls must be answered to 30 seconds, and creates new rules to protect the privacy of customer information. In addition, the Order reduces VRS compensation rates over the next four years to better approximate the actual, reasonable costs of providing VRS.

In the FNPRM, the Commission seeks further comment on a number of issues, some of which include: (1) alternative rate methodologies to provide for market-based VRS rates, (2) allowing hearing persons to buy ten-digit numbers from VRS providers in order to make and receive point-to-point video calls; (3) revising and expanding the role of the Interstate TRS Advisory Council; and (4) transferring the emergency call handling obligation from all VRS providers to a single VRS contractor.

Stay tuned for additional consumer materials from the FCC to explain these new and proposed changes.

For more information, please contact Gregory Hlibok, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at (200) 559-5158 (voice/videophone) or [gregory.hlibok@fcc.gov](mailto:gregory.hlibok@fcc.gov) or Eliot Greenwald, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at (202) 418-2235 (voice) or [eliot.greenwald@fcc.gov](mailto:eliot.greenwald@fcc.gov).

Link to the FCC Report and Order and FNPRM: <http://www.fcc.gov/document/vrs-overhaul-improve-phone-service-americans-disabilities-0>

Link to the FCC Press Release on the Report and Order and FNPRM: <http://www.fcc.gov/document/vrs-overhaul-improve-phone-service-americans-disabilities>

Link to the Chairwoman Clyburn Statement: <http://www.fcc.gov/article/fcc-13-82a2>

Link to the video in American Sign Language: <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/telecommunications-relay-services-trs>