

Date: Friday, July 15, 2016
Subject: FCC Protects Consumers with Disabilities During Network Technology Transitions

On July 15, 2016, the FCC released new rules to protect consumers with disabilities, among others, during the transition from landline phone network technology to modern technologies.

Under the new rules, a phone company or carrier requesting the FCC's permission to replace its legacy network technologies with updated technologies must certify that a replacement service provides levels of accessibility, usability, and compatibility for consumers with disabilities as effective as the legacy voice service. Carriers further must ensure that the replacement services offer access to telecommunication relay services (TRS). Carriers are also encouraged to offer new accessibility features available through the new technologies to their customers with disabilities, and to make the transition as simple and inexpensive as possible for customers with disabilities. Additionally, carriers must have a consumer outreach plan, appropriate consumer education materials, and staff trained to assist consumers with disabilities with the disability access issues related to the transition.

For more information please read paragraphs 146-156 (disability access to the new services) and paragraphs 179-186 (accessible consumer education). For specific questions, please contact Peter Sharako at Peter.Sharako@fcc.gov, or 202-418-1856.

Links:

Webpage: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-releases-tech-transitions-order>

News Release:

Word: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-340303A1.docx

PDF: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-340303A1.pdf

Text: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-340303A1.txt

Declaratory Ruling, Second Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration: Word:

https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-90A1.docx

PDF: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-90A1.pdf

Text: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-90A1.txt