

Press Information Bureau
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TRAI issues new guidelines for activation and de-activation of Value added Services

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued a Direction to the service providers, on the procedures for providing Value Added Services (VAS) and for de-activation of the Value Added Services so as to protect the interest of consumers.

Activation of Value Added Services by service providers has been the cause of many customer complaints and is a major concern for TRAI as well. The Authority has been addressing, from time to time, consumer issues, which have come to its notice through consumer complaints, relating to activation of value added service through different modes, without the explicit consent of the consumer. These directions essentially prescribe the manner in which the explicit consent of the consumer is to be obtained for activation of value added services through different modes. While issuing these directions, the Authority has also considered the interests of the service providers and growth of value added service industry.

Therefore, the Authority in partial modification of existing directions has directed all Service providers through this direction, to implement a uniform procedure for taking explicit consent of the consumer for activation of value added service and for deactivation of value added service, the salient features of which are :-

- a. VAS activation procedure to include all forms of activations and scenarios –OBD, IVRS, WAP, Mobile Internet, USSD, SMS, Tele-calling and any other mode of activation.
- b. The service provider has to provide a system which takes a second consent from the customer before providing a value added service through any means- OBD, IVRS, WAP, Mobile Internet, USSD, SMS, Tele-calling or any other mode of activation. The first offer of a service is on the service providers' platform and a second confirmation from the customer is through a dedicated consent gateway which is owned by a third party and not by the service provider. It is only after receiving a second confirmation from the customer, that the service provider shall activate the value added service.
- c. Common de-activation procedure using toll Free Common Short Code 155223. (all requests for de-activation to be completed in 4 hours)
- d. The deactivation procedure to be publicized through advertisements in newspapers, updation in the website and SMS blasts.
- e. 24hrs before auto renewals of the VAS services, information about renewals to be provided to the customers, through SMS and Outbound Dialing (OBD).
- f. In case of wrong activation, the amount shall be refunded within 24 hours of the customer's request. Such customer requests should be within 24 hours for value added services with validity of more than one day and within 6 hours for value added services with validity of one day.

g. In case of USSD and SMS mode of activation, no activation response time should be greater than 10 seconds and 60 minutes respectively and in case of non-response, the same should be treated as 'no activation required'.

h. Upon activation of VAS service, the de-activation number, the validity of the VAS service and charges for renewal should be explicitly informed.

i. Monthly report on activations, de-activations and complaints received and their redressal to be submitted to TRAI.

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