

FCC Consumer Advisory

Deadline for VRS and IP Relay Users to Obtain Ten-Digit Numbers Delayed Until November 12, 2009

Background

Through a series of orders in 2008, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules regarding the assignment of ten-digit geographic telephone numbers to persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities who use Video Relay Service (VRS) or Internet Protocol (IP) Relay, two forms of Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). A ten-digit geographic telephone number is the same kind of telephone number that has been used for decades by voice telephone users to subscribe to local telephone service. The FCC adopted the ten-digit numbering requirements in conjunction with new emergency 911 call handling requirements for VRS and IP Relay providers.

Pursuant to these rules, many eligible VRS and IP Relay users have now registered with a VRS or an IP Relay provider (a “default provider”) to obtain a ten-digit geographic telephone number. As a result, these VRS and IP Relay users have been able to make calls from and receive calls dialed by voice telephone users to their new ten-digit numbers. Voice telephone users no longer need to know the VRS or IP Relay user’s IP address to complete the call.

New Deadline

Users of VRS and/or IP Relay are reminded, if they have not done so already, to register with the VRS or IP Relay provider of their choice as soon as possible, and no later than November 12, 2009. After November 12, 2009, all VRS and IP Relay users must be registered with a default provider in order to place a non-emergency call through any VRS or IP Relay provider. In addition, after that date, VRS and IP Relay providers will no longer complete calls to a “proxy” or “alias” number that may have been previously obtained from a provider.

Previously, the deadline for registering was June 30, 2009. In late April, however, the majority of VRS and IP Relay providers asked the FCC to extend the deadline. Therefore, to eliminate any possible user confusion and address any technical concerns, the FCC delayed the registration deadline until November 12, 2009.

VRS and IP Relay users are reminded to provide accurate information about their physical location to their default provider, and to update this information whenever it changes. Providing this information ensures that, in an emergency, the selected

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provider can automatically connect any 911 call placed by the VRS or IP Relay user to the appropriate emergency services personnel, including those close to the caller's location. Registration with a default provider, including the updating of users' location information, is critical to the effective handling of 911 calls.

Emergency Calling Tips for VRS and IP Relay Users

- Make sure you are familiar with your provider's procedures for updating your Registered Location, and promptly update the information if it changes.
- Know any limitations of your service, and have a plan for making emergency calls in the event of a power or an Internet outage. You may want to keep a TTY and traditional phone line, or install a backup power supply.
- Inform children, babysitters, and visitors about using your VRS or IP Relay service and the limitations, if any, on placing emergency calls.

Filing a Complaint with the FCC

If you have a problem completing a 911 call through a VRS or IP Relay provider, notify the provider. You can also file a complaint with the FCC. There is no charge for filing a complaint. The easiest way to file a complaint is to go to the FCC's on-line complaint forms found on the FCC Web site at esupport.fcc.gov/complaints.htm. You will be asked a series of questions that will take you to the correct form and section of the form for providing all of the information the FCC needs to process your complaint. You can also file a complaint with the FCC's Consumer Center by e-mailing fccinfo@fcc.gov; calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to the FCC at the following address:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554.

For More Information

For more information about the FCC's ten-digit numbering requirements and E911 procedures for VRS and IP Relay, see the FCC consumer advisories at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trstendigit-user-meaning.html and www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trstendigit.html. For more information about TRS, VRS, or IP Relay, or to learn more about FCC programs to promote access to telecommunications services for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro. For information about other telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center using the information provided for filing a complaint.



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