

IP Relay Service

FCC Consumer Facts

Background

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) permits persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device. Now TRS users are only a mouse click away from a new TRS option. All they need is an Internet connection and they can use Internet Protocol (IP) Relay. For more information about other forms of TRS, see the FCC's consumer guide at www.fcc.gov/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs.

How IP Relay Service Works

IP Relay allows people who have difficulty hearing or speaking to communicate through the telephone system with hearing persons. IP Relay is accessed using a computer and the Internet, rather than a TTY and a telephone. So individuals who use IP Relay do not need to invest in a TTY; they simply use the computer to communicate by text. When conversing over IP Relay, people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have difficulty speaking can participate in a conference call or go online while holding a conversation.

Unlike traditional TRS, where a TTY user contacts a TRS center via telephone lines and the communication assistant (CA) at the TRS center calls the receiving party via voice telephone, the first leg of an IP Relay call goes from the caller's computer, or other Web-enabled device, to the IP Relay Center via the Internet. The IP Relay Center is usually accessed via a webpage. The second leg of the call, as with traditional TRS, is from the CA to the receiving party via voice telephone through the public switched telephone network.

There are no additional costs to consumers for IP Relay beyond a computer or other Web-capable device and an Internet connection.

How IP Relay Service Works (cont'd.)

IP Relay service providers are compensated from the Interstate TRS Fund, which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) oversees.

Ten Digit Geographic Number

IP relay users, as of November 12, 2009, must be registered with a default IP relay provider. This registration process will give IP relay users a ten-digit geographic number, from which they can make or receive calls, and are able to make 911 calls with their location information, which will then route their 911 call to the appropriate PSAP. This provides a more functionally equivalent 911 access for IP Relay users.

Benefits of IP Relay

There are several consumer benefits of IP Relay:

- **Availability** – IP Relay is available to anyone who has access to the Internet via a computer, personal digital assistant (PDA), Web-capable telephone or other device;

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(More)



Benefits of IP Relay (cont'd)

- **Convenience** – Consumers do not need to go to a separate TTY or log off the Internet to use a TTY telephone line. IP Relay lets consumers make relay calls even when there is no TTY handy. In addition, consumers often say that using a computer screen and keyboard is easier than using a TTY. IP Relay permits much faster typing and allows users to see much more of the conversation on their computer screens than they can see with a TTY LCD window. IP Relay also allows users to print out and save conversations;
- **Multiple Calls** – IP Relay users can initiate multiple calls simultaneously, make conference calls or browse the Internet while making a call;
- **Quality** – Transmission quality may be faster via IP Relay than via a TTY;
- **Multivendors** – Like users of most other telecommunications services, IP Relay users can choose among any of the relay providers and are not limited to their state's selected relay providers. Providers therefore compete for consumers, which enhances service quality.

Filing a Complaint with the FCC

If you have a problem with IP Relay Service, first try to resolve it with the provider. If you are unable to resolve it directly, you can file a complaint with the FCC. There is no charge for filing a complaint. You can file your complaint using an online complaint form found at www.fcc.gov/complaints. You can also file your complaint with the FCC's Consumer Center by 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:

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

What to Include in Your Complaint

The best way to provide all the information the FCC needs to process your complaint is to thoroughly complete the online complaint form. When you open the online complaint form, you will be asked a series of questions that will take you to the particular section of the form you need to complete. If you do not use the online complaint form, your complaint should at least indicate:

- your name, address, email address and phone number where you can be reached;
- whether you are filing a complaint on behalf of another party, and, if so, the party's name, address, email address, day time phone number and your relationship to the party;
- preferred format or method of response (letter, fax, voice phone call, email, TRS, TTY, ASCII text, audio recording or Braille);
- that your complaint is about TRS;
- the name, address and telephone number (if known) of the company or companies involved with your complaint; and
- a brief description of your complaint and the resolution you are seeking, and a full description of the equipment or service you are complaining about, including date of purchase, use or attempt to use.

For More Information

For more information about IP Relay or TRS, or to learn more about FCC programs to promote access to telecommunications services for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office website at www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro. For information about other telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center using the information provided for filing a complaint.



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To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/.

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