

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Sprint Communications Company	)	IC Nos. 04-S86552
	)	04-S86621
Complaints Regarding	)	04-S86623
Unauthorized Change of	)	04-S86725
Subscriber's Telecommunications Carrier	)	04-S86768
		04-S86906
		04-S86917
		04-S86923
		04-S86988
		04-S87031
		04-S87040
		04-S87051
		04-S87083
		04-S87122
		04-S87142
		04-S87145
		04-S87189
		04-S87305
		04-S87401
		04-S87456

**ORDER**

**Adopted: March 25, 2005**

**Released: March 31, 2005**

By the Deputy Chief, Consumer Policy Division, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau:

1. In this Order, we consider the complaints<sup>1</sup> alleging that Sprint Communications Company (Sprint) changed Complainants' telecommunications service providers without obtaining authorization and verification from Complainants' in violation of the Commission's rules.<sup>2</sup> We conclude that Sprint's actions did not result in an unauthorized change in Complainants' telecommunications service providers and we deny Complainants' complaints.

2. In December 1998, the Commission released the *Section 258 Order* in which it adopted rules to implement Section 258 of the Communications Act of 1934 (Act), as amended

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> See 47 C.F.R. §§ 64.1100 – 64.1190.

by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act).<sup>3</sup> Section 258 prohibits the practice of “slamming,” the submission or execution of an unauthorized change in a subscriber’s selection of a provider of telephone exchange service or telephone toll service.<sup>4</sup> In the *Section 258 Order*, the Commission adopted aggressive new rules designed to take the profit out of slamming, broadened the scope of the slamming rules to encompass all carriers, and modified its existing requirements for the authorization and verification of preferred carrier changes. The rules require, among other things, that a carrier receive individual subscriber consent before a carrier change may occur.<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to Section 258, carriers are absolutely barred from changing a customer's preferred local or long distance carrier without first complying with one of the Commission's verification procedures.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, a carrier must: (1) obtain the subscriber's written or electronically signed authorization in a format that meets the requirements of Section 64.1130 authorization; (2) obtains confirmation from the subscriber via a toll-free number provided exclusively for the purpose of confirming orders electronically; or (3) utilize an independent third party to verify the subscriber's order.<sup>7</sup>

3. The Commission also has adopted liability rules. These rules require the carrier to absolve the subscriber where the subscriber has not paid his or her bill. In that context, if the subscriber has not already paid charges to the unauthorized carrier, the subscriber is absolved of liability for charges imposed by the unauthorized carrier for service provided during the first 30 days after the unauthorized change.<sup>8</sup> Where the subscriber has paid charges to the unauthorized

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<sup>3</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 258(a); Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996); *Implementation of the Subscriber Carrier Selection Changes Provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; Policies and Rules Concerning Unauthorized Changes of Consumers’ Long Distance Carriers*, CC Docket No. 94-129, Second Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making, 14 FCC Rcd 1508 (1998) (*Section 258 Order*), *stayed in part*, *MCI Company v. FCC*, No. 99-1125 (D.C. Cir. May 18, 1999); First Order on Reconsideration, 15 FCC Rcd 8158 (2000); *stay lifted*, *MCI Company v. FCC*, No. 99-1125 (D.C. Cir. June 27, 2000); Third Report and Order and Second Order on Reconsideration, 15 FCC Rcd 15996 (2000), Errata, DA No. 00-2163 (rel. Sept. 25, 2000), Erratum, DA No. 00-2192 (rel. Oct. 4, 2000), Order, FCC 01-67 (rel. Feb. 22, 2001); Third Report and Order and Second Order on Reconsideration, 18 FCC Rcd 5099 (2003); Order, FCC 03-116, (rel. May 23, 2003). Prior to the adoption of Section 258, the Commission had taken various steps to address the slamming problem. *See, e.g., Policies and Rules Concerning Unauthorized Changes of Consumers’ Long Distance Carriers*, CC Docket No. 94-129, Report and Order, 10 FCC Rcd 9560 (1995), *stayed in part*, 11 FCC Rcd 856 (1995); *Policies and Rules Concerning Changing Long Distance Carriers*, CC Docket No. 91-64, 7 FCC Rcd 1038 (1992), *reconsideration denied*, 8 FCC Rcd 3215 (1993); Investigation of Access and Divestiture Related Tariffs, CC Docket No. 83-1145, Phase I, 101 F.C.C.2d 911, 101 F.C.C.2d 935, *reconsideration denied*, 102 F.C.C.2d 503 (1985).

<sup>4</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 258(a).

<sup>5</sup> *See* 47 C.F.R. § 64.1120.

<sup>6</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 258(a).

<sup>7</sup> *See* 47 C.F.R. § 64.1120(c). Section 64.1130 details the requirements for letter of agency form and content for written or electronically signed authorizations. 47 C.F.R. § 64.1130.

<sup>8</sup> *See* 47 C.F.R. §§ 64.1140, 64.1160. Any charges imposed by the unauthorized carrier on the subscriber for service provided after this 30-day period shall be paid by the subscriber to the authorized carrier at the rates the subscriber was paying to the authorized carrier at the time of the unauthorized change. *Id.*

carrier, the Commission's rules require that the unauthorized carrier pay 150% of those charges to the authorized carrier, and the authorized carrier shall refund or credit to the subscriber 50% of all charges paid by the subscriber to the unauthorized carrier.<sup>9</sup> Carriers should note that our actions in this Order do not preclude the Commission from taking additional action, if warranted, pursuant to section 503 of the Act.<sup>10</sup>

4. We received Complainants' complaints alleging that Complainants' telecommunications service providers had been changed without Complainants' authorization.<sup>11</sup> Pursuant to Sections 1.719 and 64.1150 of our rules,<sup>12</sup> we notified Sprint of the complaints and Sprint responded.<sup>13</sup> Sprint states that authorization was received and confirmed through third party verifications or signed letter of agency. We find that Sprint has produced clear and convincing evidence of a valid authorized carrier change by Complainants.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, we find that Sprint's actions did not result in an unauthorized change in Complainants' telecommunications service.<sup>15</sup>

5. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to Section 258 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. § 258, and Sections 0.141, 0.361 and 1.719 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 0.141, 0.361, 1.719, the complaints filed ARE DENIED.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Nancy A. Stevenson, Deputy Chief  
Consumer Policy Division  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

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<sup>9</sup> See 47 C.F.R. §§ 64.1140, 64.1170.

<sup>10</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 503.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>12</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 1.719 (Commission procedure for informal complaints filed pursuant to Section 258 of the Act); 47 C.F.R. § 64.1150 (procedures for resolution of unauthorized changes in preferred carrier).

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>14</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 64.1150(d).

<sup>15</sup> If a Complainant is unsatisfied with the resolution of this complaint, such Complainant may file a formal complaint with the Commission pursuant to Section 1.721 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.721. Such filing will be deemed to relate back to the filing date of such Complainant's informal complaint so long as the formal complaint is filed within 45 days from the date this order is mailed or delivered electronically to such Complainant. See 47 C.F.R. § 1.719.

## APPENDIX A

<u>INFORMAL COMPLAINT NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE OF COMPLAINT</u>	<u>DATE OF CARRIER RESPONSE</u>
04-S86552	April 4, 2004	May 24, 2004
04-S86621	April 1, 2004	May 6, 2004
04-S86623	April 6, 2004	June 23, 2004
04-S86725	April 25, 2004	June 29, 2004
04-S86768	February 23, 2004	June 30, 2004
04-S86906	February 25, 2004	June 24, 2004
04-S86917	February 25, 2004	June 4, 2004
04-S86923	March 15, 2004	June 16, 2004
04-S86988	March 15, 2004	June 29, 2004
04-S87031	April 23, 2004	June 15, 2004
04-S87040	April 15, 2004	June 30, 2004
04-S87051	April 6, 2004	July 1, 2004
04-S87083	April 14, 2004	June 23, 2004
04-S87122	March 30, 2004	July 13, 2004
04-S87142	May 17, 2004	July 13, 2004
04-S87145	May 10, 2004	July 13, 2004
04-S87189	April 28, 2004	June 30, 2004
04-S87305	May 10, 2004	July 16, 2004
04-S87401	May 3, 2004	July 29, 2004
04-S87456	May 12, 2004	August 9, 2004