



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 17, 2012

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Mike Snyder, 202-418-0997
E-mail: Michael.Snyder@fcc.gov

FCC ADOPTS RULES TO PROTECT EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM UNWANTED ROBOCALLS

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today took steps to protect emergency service providers from unwanted robocalls that can tie up their phone lines. Consistent with the requirements of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, the Commission has adopted rules establishing a specialized Do-Not-Call registry for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and prohibiting the use of robocalling equipment to contact registered PSAP phone numbers other than for an emergency purpose. PSAPs are typically 9-1-1 call centers that receive emergency calls and route them to emergency service personnel. By some estimates, hundreds or even thousands of unwanted robocalls are made to PSAPs each day, tying up public safety phone lines and diverting critical first responder resources away from the provision of emergency services.

Specifically, the new rules:

- Allow PSAPs to upload any number associated with the provision of emergency services or communications with other public safety agencies onto a specialized Do-Not-Call registry;
- Prohibit operators of robocalling equipment from using such equipment to contact any number on the registry except for an emergency purpose; and
- Adopt specific monetary penalties, as required by the Tax Relief Act, for contacting or disclosing numbers contained in the PSAP registry. Specifically, in the case of violations of the requirement prohibiting disclosure or dissemination of registered numbers, the Tax Relief Act provides for monetary penalties of not less than \$100,000 per incident nor more than \$1,000,000 per incident. For violations of the prohibition on robocalling numbers on the registry, the Tax Relief Act provides for monetary penalties that are not less than \$10,000 per call or text nor more than \$100,000 per call or text.

The rules also address concerns voiced by the public safety community in comments to the FCC about the potential problems unwanted texts to PSAPs may pose in the future.

Following today's action to establish the PSAP Do-Not-Call registry, Commission staff will continue to work on the registry's operational details. Once this work is complete, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau will release a Public Notice announcing the specific operational details, including the effective date for compliance with the new rules. The Commission intends to work with public safety organizations to ensure that PSAPs are made aware of the opportunity to place their phone numbers on the registry, and with robocalling equipment operators to inform them about the new requirements.

Action by the Commission October 17, 2012, by Report and Order (FCC 12-129) Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai.

CGB Contact: Richard D. Smith (717-338-2797; Richard.Smith@fcc.gov).

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