



NEWS

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

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>

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).

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FCC PLANS \$1.6 MILLION FINE AGAINST FLORIDA CARRIER FOR CONTINUING TO BILL CONSUMERS AFTER THEY CANCELLED PHONE SERVICE

Long Distance Carrier Allegedly Billed Consumers for Unauthorized Charges on “Closed Accounts”

Washington, DC – The Federal Communications Commission plans to fine Net One International, Inc., a Florida telephone company, \$1.6 million for allegedly billing consumers for unauthorized charges (commonly known as “cramming”) and late fees even though the customers had already closed their accounts and paid their final bills.

“Shaking down consumers by billing them for unwanted charges on closed accounts is intolerable,” said Travis LeBlanc, Acting Chief of the Enforcement Bureau. “When a consumer says ‘I am done, cancel my account,’ they mean it. Period.”

Based on its review of over 100 consumer complaints, the FCC found that over a period of several years, Net One repeatedly billed consumers long after the consumers had affirmatively cancelled their service, paid their final bills, and switched to other carriers. In some instances, after consumers had already received and paid what Net One called a “final bill,” the company still tried to negotiate additional fees and charges with its former customers. Complaints also alleged that Net One would threaten them with debt collection actions if consumers failed to pay charges they had not authorized.

The FCC found that Net One’s conduct was “egregious,” and that a sizable fine was warranted, in part, because of the “substantial harm” that Net One caused consumers, requiring them to expend significant time and effort trying to remove the unauthorized charges. The FCC also emphasized that Net One continued its alleged cramming practices for several years, despite repeated warnings from the Commission.

Separately, in January, the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau affirmed a \$25,000 fine issued to Net One in 2011 for failing to fully respond to the Bureau’s inquiries about cramming allegations.

The Commission is committed to protecting consumers against cramming and will take aggressive action against carriers that perpetrate such unjust, unreasonable, and deceptive acts. Since January 2014, the FCC has taken five enforcement actions against carriers for cramming and slamming that have totaled approximately \$19 million in proposed penalties and payments to the U.S. Treasury. This is the FCC’s second such action this week, following a proposed \$7.62 million fine to Optic Internet Protocol on Monday.

For more information about the FCC’s rules protecting consumers from unauthorized charges on phone bills, see the FCC consumer guide, *Cramming - Unauthorized, Misleading, or Deceptive Charges Placed on Your Telephone Bill*. For information about other communications issues, visit the FCC’s Consumer website, or contact 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 by writing to:

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

The Notice of Apparent Liability is available at:

https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-14-100A1.pdf

The 2014 Forfeiture Order is available at: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-14-38A1.pdf

The Notice of Apparent Liability to Optic Internet Protocol is available at:

https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-14-101A1.pdf

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