

**FCC Consumer Advisory Committee**  
Recommendation Regarding Battery Backup Community Outreach and Education

WHEREAS, the Commission has recognized that “consumers are increasingly relying on new types of service for residential voice communications, and that in many areas traditional line-powered 911 service is now, or is soon likely to be, no longer be available.”<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS, data cited by the Commission indicate that almost 75 percent of U.S. residential customers (approximately 88 million households) no longer receive telephone service over traditional copper facilities, including 30 percent of all residential customers that have IP-based voice services from cable, fiber, and other providers, and over 40 percent of households that are “wireless-only.”<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS, while voice service over traditional copper facilities is line-powered and functional during commercial power outages, many consumers might be unaware that the new voice services they are transitioning to do not have the same capabilities and require the special provisioning of backup power in the event of a commercial power outage.

WHEREAS, consumers’ ability to reach public safety answering points (PSAPs) and emergency services such as 911 is jeopardized without functional voice or mobile wireless service.

WHEREAS, the Commission has recognized that technology transitions should not “diminish access to critical communications services, especially 911.”<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS, the Commission has required wireline carriers to disclose to subscribers the: (1) availability of backup power sources; (2) service limitations with and without backup power during a power outage; (3) purchase and replacement options; (4) expected backup power duration; (5) proper usage and storage conditions for the backup power source; (6) subscriber backup power self-testing and monitoring instructions; and (7) backup power warranty details, if any.<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, the Commission has further encouraged, but not required, wireline providers to engage in comprehensive community outreach and education regarding the availability of backup power in commercial power outage events.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Communications Commission *In the Matter of Ensuring Continuity of 911 Communications*, Report and Order, FCC 15-98, PS Docket No. 14- 174 ¶ 12 (rel. Aug. 7, 2015). Notice was published in the *Federal Register* on October 16, 2015. 80 F.R. 62470.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *In the Matter of Technology Transitions*, Report and Order, WC Docket No. 05-25 *et al.*, ¶9, rel. Aug. 7, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *In the Matter of Ensuring Continuity of 911 Communications*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 15-98, PS Docket No. 14-174, ¶ 43 (rel. Nov. 25, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, ¶ 60.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, ¶¶78-82.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) recommends the FCC work closely with wireless and wireline carriers and other service providers (including VoIP), state regulatory commissions, PSAPs, state, local, and tribal governments, consumer advocacy and community based organizations (“CBOs”), and social service agencies to develop best practices and comprehensive initiatives that will educate consumers about backup power and recharging capabilities and options for switched fiber, IP-based, and wireless voice services as applicable. Education initiatives should be specifically tailored to the special needs of consumers, including diverse populations and those who are disabled, elderly and low-income.

Following the release of this recommendation, at six-month intervals, the Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau should provide the CAC with updates regarding the development, publication, and targeted outreach for consumer education best practices to empower consumers to address backup power and recharging capacities for fiber, IP-based, and wireless voice services.

Unanimously Adopted: June 10, 2016

Respectfully Submitted:

Debra R. Berlyn, Chairperson

FCC Consumer Advisory Committee