

Media Contact:

Mark Wigfield, (202) 418-0253
mark.wigfield@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

FCC TAKES STEPS TO PREVENT FRAUD IN TOLL FREE TEXTING

Action Would Protect Valuable Tool for Consumers, Businesses

WASHINGTON, June 7, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission today took steps to establish clear, strong, and consistent safeguards to prevent the fraudulent use of toll free numbers in text messaging.

Toll free texting is becoming a valuable tool for businesses and consumers alike, enabling them to communicate with each other through easily identifiable numbers for both text messages and voice communications. But currently, there is a lack of clarity concerning who can provide authorization to text-enable a toll free number.

This lack of clarity could facilitate fraudulent behavior. For example, a toll free number on the back of a credit card could be text-enabled by a third party without the knowledge of the bank that subscribes to the toll free number, and fraudulent texts could then be sent to a consumer asking for sensitive account information.

In a Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the FCC:

- Clarified that a text messaging provider may not text-enable a toll free number without first obtaining authorization from the subscriber for that number
- Clarified that a messaging provider may not text-enable a toll free number that is not yet assigned to a subscriber
- Clarified that messaging providers must disable toll free texting upon request by the subscriber
- Seeks comment on a proposal to require a toll free subscriber to inform the company that manages the assignment and routing of the toll free number, known as a Responsible Organization or RespOrg, that the subscriber has authorized its toll free number for text messages
- Seeks comment on a proposal that the RespOrg must reflect the subscriber's authorization to text-enable its toll free number in the toll free Service Management System (SMS) Database
- Seeks comment on a proposal requiring that a messaging provider obtain the subscriber's authorization for text-enabling a number through the RespOrg
- Seeks comment on what other information, if any, needs to be captured and centrally

managed to protect the integrity of the toll free numbering system

Action by the Commission June 7, 2018 by Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 18-77). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel approving. Chairman Pai and Commissioner O’Rielly issuing separate statements.

WC Docket No. 18-28; CC Docket No. 95-155

###

Office of Media Relations: (202) 418-0500
ASL Videophone: (844) 432-2275
TTY: (888) 835-5322
Twitter: @FCC
www.fcc.gov/media-relations

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).