

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending Docket No. UT 040015, General Order No. R-516, filed 1/10/05, effective 2/10/05)

WAC 480-120-262 Operator service providers (OSPs). (1)

Only for the purpose of this section:

"Consumer" means the party paying for a call using operator services. For collect calls, a consumer is both the originating party and the party who receives the call.

"Customer" means the call aggregator or pay phone service provider (PSP) contracting with an operator service provider (OSP) for service, such as hotel, motel, hospital, correctional facility, prison, campus, or similar entity.

"Operator service provider (OSP)" means any corporation, company, partnership, or person providing a connection to intrastate or interstate long-distance or to local services from locations of call aggregators.

"Operator services" means any telecommunications service provided to a call aggregator location that includes automated or live assistance to consumers in billing or completing (or both) telephone calls, other than those billed to the number from which the call originated or those completed through an access code used to bill a consumer's account previously established with the company.

This section applies to OSPs providing operator services from pay phones and other call aggregator locations. Each OSP

must maintain a current list of the customers it serves in Washington and the locations and telephone numbers where the service is provided.

(2) **Posted disclosure.** OSPs must post clearly, legibly, and unobstructed, on or near the front of the pay phone the presubscribed OSP's name, address, and toll-free number, as registered with the commission. This information must be updated within thirty days after a change of OSPs. OSPs must post a notice to consumers that they can access other long distance companies and, in contrasting colors, the commission compliance number for consumer complaints and the following information:

"If you have a complaint about service from this pay phone and are unable to resolve it by calling the repair or refund number or operator, please call the commission at 1-888-333-WUTC (9882)."

(3) **Oral disclosure of rates.** This subsection applies to all calls from pay phones or other call aggregator locations, including, but not limited to, prison phones and store-and-forward pay phones or "smart" phones. When a collect call is placed, both the consumer placing the call and the consumer receiving the call must be given the rate quote options required by this section.

(a) **Oral rate disclosure message required.** Before an operator-assisted call from a call aggregator location can be connected by an OSP (whether by a presubscribed or other provider), the OSP must first provide an oral rate disclosure

message to the consumer. If the charges to the consumer do not exceed the benchmark rate in (f) of this subsection, the oral rate disclosure message must comply with the requirements of (b) of this subsection. In all other instances, the oral rate disclosure message must comply with the requirements of (c) of this subsection.

(b) **Rate disclosure method when charges do not exceed benchmark.** The oral rate disclosure message must state that the consumer may receive a rate quote and explain the method of obtaining the quote. The method of obtaining the quote may be by pressing a specific key or keys, but no more than two keys, or by staying on the line. If the consumer follows the directions to obtain the rate quote, the OSP must state all rates and charges that will apply if the consumer completes the call.

(c) **Rate disclosure method when rates exceed benchmark.** The oral rate disclosure message must state all rates and charges that will apply if the consumer completes the call.

(d) **Charge must not exceed rate quote.** If the OSP provides a rate quote pursuant to either (b) or (c) of this subsection, the charges to the user must not exceed the quoted rate. If a consumer complains to the commission that the charges exceeded the quoted rate, and the consumer states the exact amount of the quote, there will be a rebuttable presumption that the quote provided by the complaining consumer was the quote received by the consumer at the time the call was placed or accepted.

(e) **Completion of call.** Following the consumer's response

to any of the above, the OSP must provide oral information advising that the consumer may complete the call by entering the consumer's calling card number.

(f) **Benchmark rates.** An OSP's charges for a particular call exceed the benchmark rate if the sum of all charges, other than taxes and fees required by law to be assessed directly on the consumer, would exceed, for any duration of the call, the sum of fifty cents multiplied by the duration of the call in minutes plus fifty cents. For example, an OSP's charges would exceed the benchmark rate if any of these conditions were true:

(i) Charges for a one-minute call exceeded one dollar;

(ii) Charges for a five-minute call exceeded three dollars;

or

(iii) Charges for a ten-minute call exceeded five dollars and fifty cents.

(4) **Access.** Pay phones must provide access to the services identified in WAC 480-120-263(3).

(5) **Branding.** The OSP must identify audibly and distinctly the OSP providing the service at the beginning of every call, including an announcement to the called party on collect calls. The OSP must ensure that the call begins no later than immediately following the prompt to enter billing information on automated calls and on live and automated operator calls, when the call is initially routed to the operator. The OSP must state the name of the company as registered with the commission (or its registered "doing business as" name) whenever referring to the OSP. When not necessary to identify clearly the OSP, the

company may omit terms such as "company," "communications," "incorporated," or "of the Northwest."

(6) **Billing.** The OSP must provide to the billing company applicable call detail necessary for billing purposes and an address and toll-free number for consumer inquiries. The OSP must ensure that consumers are not billed for calls that are not completed. For billing purposes calls must be itemized, identified, and rated from the point of origination to the point of termination. An OSP may not transfer a call to another company unless the call can be billed from the point of origin. The OSP must provide specific call detail upon request, in accordance with WAC 480-120-161 (Form of bills). Charges billed to a credit card need not conform to the call detail requirements of that section.

(7) **Operational capabilities.** The OSP must answer at least ninety percent of all calls within ten seconds of the time the call reaches the company's switch. The OSP must maintain adequate facilities in all locations so the overall blockage rate for lack of facilities, including the facilities for access to consumers' preferred interexchange companies, does not exceed one percent in the time-consistent busy hour. Should excessive blockage occur, the OSP must determine what caused the blockage and take immediate steps to correct the problem. The OSP must reoriginate calls to another company upon request and without charge when technically able to accomplish reorigination with screening and allow billing from the point of origin of the call. If reorigination is not available, the OSP must provide

dialing instructions for the consumer's preferred company.

~~(8) (**Emergency calls.** For purposes of emergency calls, every OSP must be able to transfer the caller into the appropriate E911 system and to the public safety answering point (PSAP) serving the location of the caller with a single keystroke from the operator's console, to include automatic identification of the exact location and address from which the call is being made. The OSP must be able to stay on the line with the emergency call until the PSAP representative advises the operator that they are no longer required to stay on the call. The OSP must provide a toll-free number for direct access to PSAPs should additional information be needed when responding to a call for assistance from a phone using the provider's services. That emergency contact information must not be considered proprietary.~~

~~(9))~~ **Fraud protection.**

(a) A company may not bill a call aggregator for:

(i) Charges billed to a line for originating calls using company access codes, toll-free access codes, or originating calls that otherwise reach an operator position if the originating line subscribed to outgoing call screening or pay phone specific ANI coding digits and the call was placed after the effective date of the outgoing call screening or pay phone specific ANI coding digits order; or

(ii) Collect or third-number-billed calls if the line serving the call that was billed had subscribed to incoming call screening (also termed "billed number screening") and if the

call was placed after the effective date of the call screening service order.

(b) The access line provider must remove from the call aggregator's bill any calls billed through the access line provider in violation of this subsection. If investigation by the access line provider determines that the pertinent call screening or pay phone specific ANI coding digits was operational when the call was made, the access line provider may return the charges for the call to the company as not billable.

(c) Any call billed directly by an OSP, or through a billing method other than the access line provider, which is billed in violation of this subsection, must be removed from the call aggregator's bill. The company providing the service may request an investigation by the access line provider. If the access line provider determines that call screening or pay phone specific ANI coding digits (which would have prevented the call) was subscribed to by the call aggregator and was not operational at the time the call was placed, the OSP must bill the access line provider for the call.

~~((10))~~ (9) **Suspension.** The commission may suspend the registration of any company providing operator services if the company fails to meet minimum service levels or to provide disclosure to consumers of protection available under chapter 80.36 RCW and pertinent rules.

Except as required by federal law, no provider of pay phone access line service may provide service to any OSP whose registration is suspended.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160. 05-03-031
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