



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CABLE

March 7, 2013

Regulations Governing the Advertising, Marketing, Billing, Provision, and Termination of Telephone and Cable Television Services to Residential Customers of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

UPDATED NOTICE OF TECHNICAL SESSION & AGENDA

On February 26, 2013, the Department of Telecommunications and Cable (“Department”) issued a Notice of Technical Session & Agenda establishing a March 14th, 2013, technical session to be held at 10:00 a.m. in Hearing Room 1-E at the Department’s office at 1000 Washington Street in Boston. The Department also issued an Agenda and set of proposed Ground Rules for the technical session.

Although the Department confirms that the presently scheduled technical session will occur at the noticed time and place, it has determined that rather than proceed with a discussion based upon its existing draft revision to 207 C.M.R. 10.00 *et seq.*, the Department will instead focus on the current marketplace and existing practices within the telecommunications and cable industries relating to the broad topics covered by proposed rules. The specific details of the proposed rules will not be the focus, but rather the major categories of topics covered by said rules. In addition, if there are additional topics the parties wish to discuss, said topics will be added to the discussion. The Department does not intend to circulate any draft regulatory language (whether new or revised from the existing draft revision to 207 C.M.R. 10.00) until the conclusion of this process.

A list of topics identified by the Department appears below in the revised agenda. All participants at the first technical session will have an opportunity to comment on the topics, as well as on the scope of the technical sessions generally.

REVISED AGENDA

- 10:00-10:15 **Introduction and Welcome:** Department Commissioner Why will welcome participants and provide a general overview of the scope and purpose of the technical sessions.
- 10:15-10:20 **Identification of Participants:** The Department will invite all attendees at the technical session to identify themselves and the organization(s) that they represent.
- 10:20-10:45: **Process Overview and Identification of Discussion Topics:** The Department will provide an overview of the technical session process and provide an introduction to the discussion topics identified by the Department for consideration during technical sessions.

As an initial topic area, the Department proposes a discussion of billing issues, focusing upon the following topics:

- Bill issuance;
- Bill payment obligations;
- What information must be provided on each bill;
- Bill notifications (including right to dispute bill);
- Late charges and fees;
- Application of partial payments;
- Handling of charges for improperly disconnected consumers;
- Limits on transfers of service to new addresses; and
- Timely application of bill credits;
- Addressing billing errors or errors in service;
- Payment plans; and
- Security deposits.

Upon conclusion of this discussion, the Department proposes additional discussions on other topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- Disclosures;
- Written communications to consumers;
- Customer service and complaint resolution; and
- Termination of service by company or consumer.

In each of these topic areas, the Department will seek to:

1. Explore companies' existing practices against the backdrop of any currently applicable law or regulations. The Department will seek to understand why certain practices have been instituted, and gain better knowledge as to the experience with these practices in the marketplace by both consumers and industry members.
2. Discuss the development of existing practices over time and the underlying rationale for such practices.
3. Identify issues of concern about current practices whether from the company or consumer perspective.

10:45:

Address Questions About Process and Comments on Discussion Topics:

Participants may address questions concerning the process outlined above to the Department, comment on the proposed discussion topics, and identify additional topic areas for consideration by the Department.

Time
permitting:

Commence Topic-by-Topic Discussions

11:45-12:00: **Wrap Up:** Conclude discussion and set schedule for next technical session.

As discussed in its initial notice, the Department has established a service list for the technical sessions in order to ensure that interested participants receive notices, agendas, and other relevant materials from the Department. If you wish to be added to the service list, please contact the Department's Secretary, Catrice Williams, at 617-305-3580 or at catrice.williams@state.ma.us.