

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)
ON TELECOMMUNICATION ISSUES**

Q.1 Can TRAI help a consumer in resolving individual complaints?

Ans. The TRAI Act, 1997 does not envisage handling of individual consumer complaints by TRAI.

As per the Telecom Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2007, in case a consumer has a complaint, the first step is to register the complaint at the toll free Call Centre number of the service provider and obtain a docket number, confirming registration of the complaint.

Q.2 What is the time limit for redressal of complaints at the Call Centre?

Ans. The Call Centre has to redress the complaints as per the provisions in the QoS Regulation where no parameters are prescribed, complaints relating to faults/disruption of service have to be rectified within 3 days and all other complaints with 7 days.

Q.3 If the complainant is not satisfied with the redressal of the complaint at the Call Centre level, who should be contacted?

Ans. The complainant should contact Nodal Officer of the service provider and lodge his grievance.

The contact details of a Nodal Officers are available on the service provider's web site. These are also available on TRAI's website under the caption 'Consumers..... Information'. The contact details can also be obtained from the Call Centre.

Q.4 What is the time limit for redressal of a complaint by the Nodal Officer?

Ans. Complaints relating to fault or disruption of service or disconnection of service shall be redressed within three days from the date of registration of complaint. All other complaints shall be redressed within ten days from the date of registration of complaint.

If the Nodal Officer does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, one can appeal to the appellate authority of the service provider in the prescribed form.

Q.5 Where can a consumer find or obtain the prescribed appeal form for making appeal to the appellate authority?

Ans. The Form can be obtained, free of charge, from the offices of the service provider, sales outlets, offices of the Nodal Officer and appellate authority or it can be downloaded from the website of the service provider or TRAI's website.

Q.6 Is there any time limit for making appeal to the appellate authority?

Ans. Yes, the appeal has to be filed within three months of disposal of complaints by the Nodal Officer. However, the appellate authority may entertain any appeal filed after the expiry of three months.

Q.7 What is the time limit for disposal of an appeal by the appellate authority?

Ans. The time limit for disposal of the appeal by the appellate authority is three months from the date of filing of the appeal.

Q.8 In case the fault is not rectified within the certain period, is the consumer entitled to any relief?

Ans. Yes, in the case of basic telephone (wire line) connection, for delayed rectification of faults, the customer is entitled to rent rebate at the following rates:

- (a) Faults pending for more than 3 days and up to 7 days: Rent rebate for 7 days.
- (b) Faults pending for more than 7 days and up to 15 days: Rent rebate for 15 days.
- (c) Faults pending for more than 15 days: rent rebate for one month.

Q.9 What is the time limit within which a billing/ charging complaint has to be resolved?

Ans. A billing complaint (post-paid connections) and charging complaint (pre-paid connections) has to be resolved within 4 weeks. Any credit/ waiver/ adjustment, arising out of such resolution of complaint has to be made to customer's account within one week of resolution of the complaint.

Q.10 A consumer has made a request for termination (closure) of the service. How long has he to wait? What about rentals and other dues?

Ans. The service provider shall terminate the connection within 7 days. They cannot charge rental or any other charges beyond the period of 7 days of request for closure made by the customer. Further, fresh bills shall be raised only after adjustment of the security deposit. The closure/ termination of service shall not be made conditional

upon payment of dues/ bills/settlement of dispute.

The outstanding amount of security deposits has to be refunded within 60 days of closure/ termination of service.

In case of delay in refund beyond 60 days, a consumer is entitled to interest at the rate of 10% per annum for the number of days refund is delayed beyond 60 days.

Q.11 The service providers activate value added service like hello tunes, ring tunes, background music etc. on a telephone/ mobile of a consumer without his/her consent and charge for the same. Is it permissible?

Ans. The service provider cannot activate any value added service, whether chargeable or free of charge, without the explicit consent of a customer.

In case the subscriber seeks to unsubscribe the value added service within 24 hours from the time of its activation, the service provider has to deactivate the value added service and adjust or refund the deductions made if any.

Q.12 A prepaid subscriber feels that he is being overcharged. Can he get itemized usage details in respect of his mobile connection?

Ans. Yes, if a prepaid subscriber makes a request for itemized usage details, the service provider is required to supply to him the same for a period of six months preceding the month in which the request has been made. The service provider may charge a reasonable cost not exceeding Rupees Fifty for providing such details.

Tariff Related Issues

Q.13 Is there a single tariff plan, which may best suit a subscriber?

Ans. There is no single tariff plan which is uniformly best suited for each and every subscriber. There are a large number of tariff schemes in the market targeted at different user categories. It is essential for a subscriber to estimate his expected volume of usage and the pattern of usage and other preferences before deciding on the plan he should subscribe to.

Q.14 Is it mandatory for operators to convey to post-paid subscribers all compulsory fixed charges?

Ans. Yes, all monthly fixed charges, which are compulsory under a given tariff plan are to be shown under one head, for clarity and comparison of different tariff plans on offer.

Q.15 Can the service provider charge for 'CLIP facility'?

Ans. Yes, the service provider can charge for CLIP facility. However, charges for CLIP cannot be made compulsory in any tariff plan. Whenever CLIP is made chargeable, it shall be optional for subscribers and should be transparently conveyed.

Q.16 Can a service provider levy charge for provision of hard copy of the

bill?

Ans. No. TRAI has prohibited levy of charges for provision of hard copy of the bill to the post-paid subscribers.

Q.17 Is there a minimum validity period prescribed for tariff plans?

Ans. A tariff plan, once offered by a service provider, shall be available to a subscriber for a minimum period of SIX months from the date of enrolment of the subscriber to that tariff plan. This implies that no tariff component of that plan can be hiked for a period of 6 months from the date of enrolment of a subscriber to that tariff plan. However, the Subscribers are free to move to other tariff plans of their choice at any time.

Q.18 Whether any charges have to be paid for migration from one plan to another?

Ans. No charges are payable by the subscriber for migration from one tariff plan to another tariff plan.

Q.19 Can a pre-paid subscriber migrate to post-paid and vice-versa?

Ans. Yes, migration from pre-paid to post-paid and vice-versa is allowed without any migration charge and without having to change the mobile number.

Q.20 What is meant by 'lifetime' in respect of tariff scheme offering lifetime validity?

Ans. It means that tariff plans which are offered as having lifetime validity, would continue to be available to the subscriber during the current license and renewed license of the service provider.

- Q.21 What protection is available for subscribers against hike in tariff?
Ans. (i) No hike in any tariff item of a plan is permitted within a period of six months from the date of enrolment of the subscriber to that tariff plan.
(ii) In respect of lifetime tariff plans and plans having longer validity, no hike in tariff is permitted during the period of promised validity.
- Q.22 Can the unused amount in recharge coupons be carried forward?
Ans. Yes, any unused balance in the prepaid account shall be carried forward and credited if the subscriber recharges within the period specified for the purpose.
- Q.23 Can a prepaid subscriber avail any services even after his talk time is exhausted?
Ans. Services which do not affect talk time value, including incoming voice calls & SMS shall continue to be available to the prepaid subscribers during validity period even after talk time value has exhausted.
- Q.24 Is it permissible for service providers to charge processing fee on talk-time top-ups?
Ans. Service provider shall not charge fixed charges / processing fees etc., on exclusive talk-time top-ups. However, nominal fee not exceeding Rs.2/- towards administrative cost as well as applicable service tax can be levied.
- Q.25 Whether any fixed charge / rental can be levied by the service provider for providing national roaming services?

Ans. No fixed charge / rental in any form is permitted for accessing national roaming services.

Q.26 What is the composite ceiling tariff fixed by TRAI for national roaming services?

Ans. * Outgoing Local Call : Rs.1.40 per minute
* Outgoing STD : Rs.2.40 per minute
* Incoming calls : Rs.1.75 per minute

Q.27 Is incoming calls free while roaming?

Ans. No. Incoming calls are free only when the subscriber is within his home network.

Q.28 Is incoming SMS free while roaming?

Ans. Yes.

Issues relating to Broadband/Internet

Q.29 What is the permissible minimum Broadband speed limit?

Ans. As per the regulation on “Quality of Service standards for Broadband Services” issued by TRAI on 6th May, 2006, a subscriber should get minimum 80% of the subscribed broadband connection speed from ISP Node to user.

Q.30 How can a subscriber measure the download speed of his Broadband

connection?

Ans. Customers can check the speed by clicking on the speed check icon given on their website. The speed of the broadband is displayed generally in Kbps (Kilo bits per second).

Q.31 Will keeping the modem 'on' make any difference in the download limits?

Ans. Yes it can make some difference. When the PC and Modem is kept on, there is a trickling of packets from the Internet into the system, even though the PC is not connected to the Internet. Therefore, it is advisable to keep the modem off when one is not accessing Internet.

Q.32 Can Broadband connection be misused by tampering the cable?

Ans. No, it cannot be tampered if the access to Internet connection is secured by assigning a Password. It is advisable for the users to secure their PC by using proper user ID and Password. Users should also frequently change the password to avoid any misuse.

Q.33 Can the wireless Internet connection be misused?

Ans. Yes, there is a possibility of the wireless Internet connection getting misused, particularly if the Internet access is provided through Wi-Fi. To avoid that one should use proper authentication methods by using secured password and user name.

Q.34 Even though broadband is not used frequently, still huge bills are received. What could be the reason?

Ans. Broadband service is available under various types of tariff packages with different download limits. Additional download of data beyond the permissible limit would attract additional charges. Therefore, user should subscribe to a Broadband package, which suits his requirement.

Issues relating to provision of Broadcasting and Cable TV Sector

Q.35 Can a service provider specify a minimum subscription period for subscribing to a pay channel by a subscriber?

Ans. It shall be open to a service provider to specify a minimum subscription period, not exceeding three months, for subscribing to a pay channel on a-la-carte basis by a subscriber using an addressable system. (a-la-carte means – choice of individual channel)

Q.36 Can a service provider offer bouquets of channels along with pay channels?

Ans. The service provider may offer bouquets of channels in addition to offering pay channels on a-la-carte basis. But the service provider shall specify the maximum retail price for each such bouquet applicable to its ordinary subscribers.

Q.37 Can a service provider increase subscription charges offered to a subscriber?

Ans. No service provider shall increase charges for a subscription package offered by him for a minimum period of six months from the date of enrollment of the subscriber for such subscription package.

Q.38 Can a cable operator disconnect a subscriber?

Ans. No cable operator shall disconnect a subscriber without giving notice of at least 15 days clearly indicating the reasons for such disconnection.

Q.39 Can an operator levy visiting charges or charges for repair and maintenance of DTH consumer premises equipments?

Ans. No fee to be charged towards visiting charges or repair and maintenance charges of DTH consumer premises equipments during the period of warranty.

Q. 40 Who are the authorized officers to look into matters relating to violation of provisions of Cable Act?

Ans. Matters relating to violation of provisions of Cable Act are to be looked into by the concerned District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Magistrate or Commissioner of Police who have jurisdiction within their local limits.