

Prepay and Billing Corrections Guidance Document

Scope of this Paper

This paper considers the treatment of non-compliances, which may be mitigated by Communications Providers (CP) initiated corrections to customer Pre-pay accounts following the discovery of errors in largely automated metering and billing systems, e.g. in CDRs or rating.

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Whereas

- a. Pre-pay operates in virtually real time.
- b. Unlike Post-pay, there is no time period in the process whereby errors, e.g. in CDRs and rating, can be recognised and corrected prior to assembly of charges and their placement on a Bill.
- c. It is one of the Scheme's objectives, under the Metering and Billing Direction [22nd July 2003] (the Direction) Clause 4, to encourage CPs to improve individual Bill accuracy and to correct errors.
- d. Pre-pay requires greater system integrity than Post-pay, because there is immediate consumer detriment if excess charges are levied.
- e. The onus is on the Approval Body (AB) to exercise its professional judgement and on the CP to make its case for consideration under this guidance note.
- f. Cases invoking this guidance note will be subject to review in the AB Forum to ensure consistent interpretation and application.

Corrected Pre-pay Accounts Requirement

Where charging errors affecting Pre-Pay customers are:

- a. Identified;
- b. Corrections are applied within 30 days¹; and
- c. The customer's credit has not expired in the meantime.

Then such errors can be excluded from determining compliance with Table 1 of the M&B Direction (22nd July 2003), provided that:

- a. The cause of the error is noted as a "Category 2 or 3 Deficiency"² as appropriate (Clause 10.2 of the Scheme Guide refers);

¹ The period of 30 days was an initial suggestion for discussion purposes between the AB and CP. It is conceived to reflect a traditional monthly billing cycle in which errors can be corrected before they are applied to a Bill and become visible to the customer. A shorter period would be desirable and may be more appropriate.

- b. A commitment is made by the CP to a corrective action plan to achieve continuous improvement to meet the requirements of the Direction, as recommended by ISO 9001: 2000. Clause 12.10 of the Scheme Guide and Clause 8 of the Direction refer; and
- c. The underlying trend of results is compliant and therefore does not give rise to a Category 1 Deficiency.

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² If the CP and AB agree the errors are serious enough to be a Category 1 non-compliance then approval would be delayed until corrective action had been taken, but the historical incident could then be ignored in determining compliance.