

Reference: 01916690

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

2 December 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning the misuse of telephone numbers sub-allocated by call providers.

We received this request on 4 November 2024. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request

What obligations does Ofcom impose on call providers regarding the monitoring the misuse of telephone numbers they have sub allocated?

In particular are they obliged to retain records of the entity that misuses the number; report to Ofcom the misuse; retain proof that the numbers were sub allocated, so they can prove they themselves were not at fault?

Our response

We have set rules under our General Conditions of Entitlement relating to the allocation, adoption and use of telephone numbers by Communications Providers – See General Condition B1 (which starts on page 11 of this document: [General Conditions of Entitlement Unofficial Consolidated Version 1 Oct 24](#)). General Condition B1 includes obligations to secure that telephone numbers are adopted or otherwise used effectively and efficiently, in other words not misused.

This [statement](#) provides a helpful summary of our rules around misuse of numbers including suballocated numbers (see paragraphs 2.16 to 2.25). As part of this statement, we published a [“Good practice guide to help prevent misuse of sub-allocated and assigned numbers”](#) (the Guide) which sets out the steps we expect providers to take to help prevent valid telephone numbers being misused, including to facilitate scams.

Among other things, this Guide explains that:

- we expect providers to carry out ‘know your customer’ due diligence checks before suballocating and that providers should: document the checks they carry out before sub-allocating or assigning numbers; have appropriate governance in place to ensure that these checks are carried out as intended and record their risk assessments; and keep the level of risk posed by a business customer under review by monitoring for potential number misuse.
- we would expect range holders to know who the numbers were sub-allocated to and have an understanding of the use of the numbers and the associated risks.

- once providers become aware of any incidents of number misuse, range holders should also consider whether those incidents should be reported to Ofcom for potential enforcement action.

You may wish to have a look at this Guide for further information.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk – quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

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Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).