

ALERT

FCC Announces January 16, 2014 Effective Date for Rural Call Completion Order, Which Applies to All Long Distance Providers Including One-Way VoIP Providers

December 19, 2013

On December 17, 2013, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) published the Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) on rural call completion in the *Federal Register*. The Commission announced that the majority of the Order will be effective January 16, 2014.

Through the Order, the Commission adopts rules to address concerns about completion of long-distance calls to rural areas. Specifically, in the Order the Commission finds:

- Recording, retention, and reporting rules apply to providers of long-distance voice service that have more than 100,000 domestic retail subscriber lines, counting all of the providers' affiliates, including LECs, IXCs, CMRS providers, and both one-way and interconnected VoIP providers.
- "One-way VoIP services" allow users to receive calls from, or place calls to, the public switched telephone network (PSTN), but not both. For the purposes of rural call completion, one-way VoIP refers to VoIP services that allow users to place calls to the PSTN but not receive them.
- Covered providers must record and retain the following information for each long-distance call attempt: calling party number; called party number; date; time of day; whether the call is handed off to an intermediate provider, and, if so, which intermediate provider; whether the call is going to a rural

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carrier, and, if so, which rural carrier; whether the call is interstate; whether the call is answered; and certain cause code information.

- Covered providers must submit quarterly certified reports to the Commission detailing these call completion records.
- A provider that complies with the reporting requirements for one year, retains the required call detail records for the preceding three months at all times, and certifies on an annual basis that it uses no more than two intermediate providers in the call path and monitors the performance of its intermediate providers, may qualify for a safe harbor from the quarterly reporting requirements.

The Commission's announcement also noted that the ringing indication requirements (Section 64.2201) will become effective January 31, 2014. The retention of call attempt records requirement (Section 64.2103), the quarterly reporting requirement (Section 64.2105), the retention and reporting safe harbor (Section 64.2107), and the requirement that exempt originating long-distance providers file a one-time letter explaining the exemption (Paragraph 67), will become effective as announced by the Office of Management and Budget in the *Federal Register*.

The Commission also set the FNPRM pleading cycle, which seeks comment on additional reforms pertaining to auto-dialer traffic, intermediate providers, and other safe harbor options and reporting requirements. Comments are due January 16, 2014; replies are due February 18, 2014. A copy of the Report and Order and FNPRM is available [here](#).