

# The ACMA seeks public and industry comment on a new draft Emergency Call Service Determination

A new draft 2009 Emergency Call Service Determination that sets out specific requirements for telecommunications industry participants on carrying, handling and transferring emergency calls has been released for public and industry comment.



The emergency call service is an operator-assisted service designed to connect callers to an emergency service organisation in a life-threatening or time-critical situation. Australia's primary emergency call service number is Triple Zero (000), which can be dialled from any fixed-line or mobile phone, and certain VoIP services. There are also two secondary emergency call service numbers: 112, which is available from all GSM (global system for mobiles) or GSM-derived mobile phones; and 106, which connects to the text-based relay service for people who are deaf or who have a hearing or speech impairment. The ACMA currently regulates the emergency call service through the Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination 2002.

The release by the ACMA of the new draft 2009 Determination follows an extensive review initiated in April 2008 of the Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination 2002. The review garnered a wide range of opinions and suggestions about the operation of the existing legislation, and more generally about Australia's emergency call service.

A number of matters raised during the review process are beyond the scope of the ACMA's Determination and will ultimately need to be resolved by governments. The ACMA also notes that some structural issues relating to existing obligations and delivery arrangements for emergency services were raised in the Australian Government *National Broadband Network: Regulatory Reform for 21st Century Broadband* Discussion Paper (April 2009), which sought views on how to make the existing telecommunications regulatory framework operate more effectively in the longer term.

In the meantime, the ACMA is continuing to address issues within its remit by working with industry and emergency service organisations, and also taking into consideration any recommendations coming out of these and other forums.

The ACMA expects to finalise the revised Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination 2009 by late 2009 after a period of public consultation, with the closing date for submissions Friday 21 August 2009. ☞

The draft Determination and consultation paper are available on the home page of the ACMA website [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au) under 'Current issues'.

Submissions can be sent by email to: [emergency.calls@acma.gov.au](mailto:emergency.calls@acma.gov.au) in MS Word format

or by post to:

ECS Determination 2009 Consultation  
Community and National  
Interests Section  
Australian Communications  
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For enquiries about the review process, please contact Michael Ingramm on 03 9963 6793 or by email at [michael.ingramm@acma.gov.au](mailto:michael.ingramm@acma.gov.au).

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The draft 2009 Determination proposes a number of important improvements to the existing arrangements that reflect submissions from this initial review process. Key changes proposed for the legislation include:

- > new obligations on the providers of VoIP Out Only services either to provide access to Triple Zero (000) or to adequately inform their customers that access is not available;
- > revised provisions for customer information that align the obligations on mobile communication providers with those that already exist for other types of service providers; and
- > new requirements on carriers and Telstra, in its capacity as the emergency call person for Triple Zero (000) and 112, to take steps to minimise the number of non-genuine calls to the emergency call service from mobile phones.