

California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.07-04-015

**CPUC ADDRESSES BACKUP POWER SUPPLY FOR
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS AND NOTIFICATION
TO THE PUBLIC OF EMERGENCIES**

SAN FRANCISCO, January 21, 2010 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today adopted guidelines for customer education programs for facilities-based providers of telephony services (service providers) who provide service to residential customers using technologies that require backup power on a customer's premises.

The guidelines address the need for backup power to operate a customer's telephone during a power outage, backup power limitations, and service provider and customer responsibilities. The CPUC directed service providers to enhance their existing customer education programs to meet the guidelines.

Within 180 days service providers who provide service to residential customers using coaxial cable, fiber-optic cable or other technologies that require backup power on the customer's premises must enhance their existing customer education programs, or implement a customer education program if they do not have one. Service providers must also file an Advice Letter detailing their customer education programs that comply with today's decision.

The CPUC said that certain elements must be included in the service provider's customer education program as a minimum, including:

- Customers must be informed that their service utilizes a backup battery located on the customer's premises to provide service during a power outage.
- Customers must be told that cordless phones will not work during a power outage.
- Customers must be informed of the limitations of the backup battery's ability to provide service during a power outage and how to maximize the customer's ability to make necessary calls during a power outage. This will include the fact that the backup battery cannot power

a cordless phone or other equipment connected to the telephone line that requires electricity from the customer's premises, such as telecommunications devices used to assist customers with disabilities.

- Customers must be informed of their own and their service provider's responsibilities regarding battery monitoring and replacement. This will include information on the limitations of the service provider's liability as it relates to backup power.
- Information must be provided about a customer's options regarding where to place the backup battery unit on the customer's premises.
- If a customer was marketed in a language other than English, the customer education information must be presented in that language in a format the consumer can utilize.

Said Commissioner Dian M. Grueneich, "Given the increasing prevalence of non-traditional phone service and the fact that California has had and will continue to have its share of natural disasters causing outages, customer education on this issue is imperative."

"I am happy to support today's decision," said Commissioner John A. Bohn. "The requirements we have adopted reflect the CPUC's commitment to ensure that Californians have the comfort of knowing they will have reliable telecommunications services. Customer education is an essential element of making informed choices."

Added Commissioner Timothy Alan Simon, the Commissioner assigned to this proceeding, "The CPUC has taken a critical leadership role by ensuring that public safety accompanies emerging communications technologies."

Today's decision was made in response to Assembly Bill 2393, which required the CPUC to consider the need for performance reliability standards for backup power systems installed on a residential or small commercial customer's premises by a facilities-based telecommunications service provider.

The proposal voted on is available at

http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/word_pdf/AGENDA_DECISION/112538.pdf.

For more information on communications issues, please visit www.CalPhoneInfo.com.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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