



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Breaches by Operators of the SB-WLR Code of Practice

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The Commission for Communications Regulation ('ComReg') has received a number of complaints in relation to the failure of several service providers to display the customers universal account number [UAN] on their customers' bills. Having investigated the specific complaints raised, ComReg is satisfied that the particular incidents were isolated ones and due to systems problems. In each instance ComReg has reminded service providers of their obligations under the current Code of Practice.

The UAN is an important piece of information which is used by service providers to confirm that the person enquiring about the customer account is the customer concerned. This information is also required by service providers when consumers wish to change service provider.

The non availability of the UAN on documentation can result in unnecessary delays for consumers when exercising their right to change service provider. While the investigations into these incidents would suggest that the incidents were isolated, ComReg is nevertheless concerned that despite repeated reminders both at an individual company level and through industry fora some operators have failed to ensure the consistent inclusion of the UAN on appropriate correspondence, such as customer bills or correspondence in respect of the customer account. ComReg proposes therefore to include the requirement to provide this information on correspondence in a consultation on the General Authorisation process scheduled for Q4 2007. Inclusion of this obligation under the General Authorisation would then make the failure to display the UAN on correspondence an offence.

Prior to addressing this issue in the General Authorisation consultation, ComReg is using this information note to remind Authorised Operators that failure to display the UAN on customer correspondence, and in particular on all customer bills, is a breach of the SB-WLR code of practice. Given the consumer implications of this issue ComReg will continue to monitor compliance over the coming months and where appropriate advise consumers of service providers that fail to provide appropriate customer information.