

New regulations for network providers

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) on Thursday announced four new End-User and Subscriber Service Charter Regulations at a media briefing.



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“The End-User and Subscriber Service Charter Regulations seek to protect the rights of consumers by, among others, ensuring that they are provided with sufficient information that will assist them in making informed decisions, as well as facilitate redress for those consumers who have been unfairly treated by network providers,” Icasa said.

The new regulations deal with usage notifications, rollover of data, transfer of data and out-of-bundle billing.

“All licensees are required to send usage depletion notifications to consumers when their usage is at 50%, 80% and 100% depletion levels. This will enable consumers to monitor their usage and control spend on communication services,” Icasa said.

All licensees are required to provide an option to consumers to rollover unused data. This is to ensure that consumers do not lose unused data as is the current practice.

In addition, all licensees are required to provide an option to consumers to transfer data to other users on the same

network.

“All licensees are no longer allowed to charge consumers out-of-bundle rates for data when their data has run out without the consumers’ specific prior consent. This will ensure that consumers are not defaulted to out-of-bundle data charges, which are significantly higher than in-bundle charges,” Icasa said.

Icasa acknowledged the concern with regard to the perceived high cost of data and high out-of-bundle rates.

“It is important to note that the review of the End-User and Subscriber Service Charter Regulations of 2016 does not seek to directly or indirectly regulate the price of data services. Our objective is to develop minimum standards in respect of the provision of data, SMS and voice services in line with section 69 of the Electronic Communications Act of 2005 (ECA).”

The authority will publish the final Regulations in the government gazette in the next few days.

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