

§ 615. Support for universal emergency telephone number

The Federal Communications Commission shall encourage and support efforts by States to deploy comprehensive end-to-end emergency communications infrastructure and programs, based on coordinated statewide plans, including seamless, ubiquitous, reliable wireless telecommunications networks and enhanced wireless 9-1-1 service. In encouraging and supporting that deployment, the Commission shall consult and cooperate with State and local officials responsible for emergency services and public safety, the telecommunications industry (specifically including the cellular and other wireless telecommunications service providers), the motor vehicle manufacturing industry, emergency medical service providers and emergency dispatch providers, transportation officials, special 9-1-1 districts, public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials, consumer groups, and hospital emergency and trauma care personnel (including emergency physicians, trauma surgeons, and nurses). The Commission shall encourage each State to develop and implement coordinated statewide deployment plans, through an entity designated by the governor, and to include representatives of the foregoing organizations and entities in development and implementation of such plans. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize or require the Commission to impose obligations or costs on any person.

(Pub. L. 106-81, §3(b), Oct. 26, 1999, 113 Stat. 1287.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999, and not as part of the Communications Act of 1934 which comprises this chapter.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

Pub. L. 106-81, §2, Oct. 26, 1999, 113 Stat. 1286, provided that:

“(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

“(1) the establishment and maintenance of an end-to-end communications infrastructure among members of the public, emergency safety, fire service and law enforcement officials, emergency dispatch providers, transportation officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities will reduce response times for the delivery of emergency care, assist in delivering appropriate care, and thereby prevent fatalities, substantially reduce the severity and extent of injuries, reduce time lost from work, and save thousands of lives and billions of dollars in health care costs;

“(2) the rapid, efficient deployment of emergency telecommunications service requires statewide coordination of the efforts of local public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials, emergency dispatch providers, and transportation officials; the establishment of sources of adequate funding for carrier and public safety, fire service and law enforcement agency technology development and deployment; the coordination and integration of emergency communications with traffic control and management systems and the designation of 9-1-1 as the number to call in emergencies throughout the Nation;

“(3) emerging technologies can be a critical component of the end-to-end communications infrastructure connecting the public with emergency medical service providers and emergency dispatch providers, public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities, to reduce emergency response times and provide appropriate care;

“(4) improved public safety remains an important public health objective of Federal, State, and local governments and substantially facilitates interstate and foreign commerce;

“(5) emergency care systems, particularly in rural areas of the Nation, will improve with the enabling of prompt notification of emergency services when motor vehicle crashes occur; and

“(6) the construction and operation of seamless, ubiquitous, and reliable wireless telecommunications systems promote public safety and provide immediate and critical communications links among members of the public; emergency medical service providers and emergency dispatch providers; public safety, fire service and law enforcement officials; transportation officials, and hospital emergency and trauma care facilities.

“(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act [see Short Title of 1999 Amendments note set out under section 609 of this title] is to encourage and facilitate the prompt deployment throughout the United States of a seamless, ubiquitous, and reliable end-to-end infrastructure for communications, including wireless communications, to meet the Nation’s public safety and other communications needs.”

ACCURACY OF DISPATCHABLE LOCATION FOR 9-1-1 CALLS

Pub. L. 115-141, div. P, title V, §506, Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 1095, provided that:

“(a) PROCEEDING REQUIRED.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act [Mar. 23, 2018], the Commission [Federal Communications Commission] shall conclude a proceeding to consider adopting rules to ensure that the dispatchable location is conveyed with a 9-1-1 call, regardless of the technological platform used and including with calls from multi-line telephone systems (as defined in section 6502 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1471)).

“(b) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROCEEDINGS.—In conducting the proceeding required by subsection (a), the Commission may consider information and conclusions from other Commission proceedings regarding the accuracy of the dispatchable location for a 9-1-1 call, but nothing in this section shall be construed to require the Commission to reconsider any information or conclusion from a proceeding regarding the accuracy of the dispatchable location for a 9-1-1 call in which the Commission has adopted rules or issued an order before the date of the enactment of this Act.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) 9-1-1 CALL.—The term ‘9-1-1 call’ means a voice call that is placed, or a message that is sent by other means of communication, to a public safety answering point (as defined in section 222 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 222)) for the purpose of requesting emergency services.

“(2) DISPATCHABLE LOCATION.—The term ‘dispatchable location’ means the street address of the calling party, and additional information such as room number, floor number, or similar information necessary to adequately identify the location of the calling party.”

§ 615a. Service provider parity of protection

(a) Provider parity

A wireless carrier, IP-enabled voice service provider, or other emergency communications provider, and their officers, directors, employees, vendors, and agents, shall have immunity or

other protection from liability in a State of a scope and extent that is not less than the scope and extent of immunity or other protection from liability that any local exchange company, and its officers, directors, employees, vendors, or agents, have under Federal and State law (whether through statute, judicial decision, tariffs filed by such local exchange company, or otherwise) applicable in such State, including in connection with an act or omission involving the release to a PSAP, emergency medical service provider or emergency dispatch provider, public safety, fire service or law enforcement official, or hospital emergency or trauma care facility of subscriber information related to emergency calls, emergency services, or other emergency communications services.

(b) User parity

A person using wireless 9-1-1 service, or making 9-1-1 communications via IP-enabled voice service or other emergency communications service, shall have immunity or other protection from liability of a scope and extent that is not less than the scope and extent of immunity or other protection from liability under applicable law in similar circumstances of a person using 9-1-1 service that is not via wireless 9-1-1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service.

(c) PSAP parity

In matters related to 9-1-1 communications via wireless 9-1-1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service, a PSAP, and its employees, vendors, agents, and authorizing government entity (if any) shall have immunity or other protection from liability of a scope and extent that is not less than the scope and extent of immunity or other protection from liability under applicable law accorded to such PSAP, employees, vendors, agents, and authorizing government entity, respectively, in matters related to 9-1-1 communications that are not via wireless 9-1-1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service.

(d) Basis for enactment

This section is enacted as an exercise of the enforcement power of the Congress under section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution and the power of the Congress to regulate commerce with foreign nations, among the several States, and with Indian tribes.

(Pub. L. 106-81, § 4, Oct. 26, 1999, 113 Stat. 1288; Pub. L. 110-283, title II, § 201(a), July 23, 2008, 122 Stat. 2624.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

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AMENDMENTS

2008—Pub. L. 110-283, § 201(a)(1), substituted “Service provider parity of protection” for “Parity of protection for provision or use of wireless service” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-283, § 201(a)(2), substituted “wireless carrier, IP-enabled voice service provider, or other emergency communications provider, and their officers” for “wireless carrier, and its officers” and “emergency calls, emergency services, or other emergency communications services” for “emergency calls or emergency services”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 110-283, § 201(a)(3), substituted “using wireless 9-1-1 service, or making 9-1-1 communications via IP-enabled voice service or other emergency communications service, shall” for “using wireless 9-1-1 service shall” and “that is not via wireless 9-1-1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service” for “that is not wireless”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 110-283, § 201(a)(4), substituted “9-1-1 communications via wireless 9-1-1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service, a PSAP” for “wireless 9-1-1 communications, a PSAP” and “that are not via wireless 9-1-1 service, IP-enabled voice service, or other emergency communications service” for “that are not wireless”.

§ 615a-1. Duty to provide 9-1-1 and enhanced 9-1-1 service

(a) Duties

It shall be the duty of each IP-enabled voice service provider to provide 9-1-1 service and enhanced 9-1-1 service to its subscribers in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Communications Commission, as in effect on the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008 and as such requirements may be modified by the Commission from time to time.

(b) Parity for IP-enabled voice service providers

An IP-enabled voice service provider that seeks capabilities to provide 9-1-1 and enhanced 9-1-1 service from an entity with ownership or control over such capabilities, to comply with its obligations under subsection (a), shall, for the exclusive purpose of complying with such obligations, have a right of access to such capabilities, including interconnection, to provide 9-1-1 and enhanced 9-1-1 service on the same rates, terms, and conditions that are provided to a provider of commercial mobile service (as such term is defined in section 332(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d))), subject to such regulations as the Commission prescribes under subsection (c).

(c) Regulations

The Commission—

(1) within 90 days after the date of enactment of the New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008, shall issue regulations implementing such Act, including regulations that—

(A) ensure that IP-enabled voice service providers have the ability to exercise their rights under subsection (b);

(B) take into account any technical, network security, or information privacy requirements that are specific to IP-enabled voice services; and

(C) provide, with respect to any capabilities that are not required to be made available to a commercial mobile service provider but that the Commission determines under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph or paragraph (3) are necessary for an IP-enabled