

Questions & Answers For Annual Notices to Customers

To whom does this apply?

It applies to all telephone service providers with Minnesota residential or business customers – including Interconnected VoIP and wireless service providers.

What are the state and federal regulations that apply to Annual Notices to Customers?

47 C.F.R. § 64.604(c)(3) — Public Access to Information

Carriers, through publication in their directories, periodic billing inserts, placement of TRS instructions in telephone directories, through directory assistance services, and incorporation of TTY numbers in telephone directories, shall assure that callers in their service areas are aware of the availability and use of all forms of TRS. Efforts to educate the public about TRS should extend to all segments of the public, including individuals who are hard of hearing, speech disabled, and senior citizens as well as members of the general population. In addition, each common carrier providing telephone voice transmission services shall conduct, not later than October 1, 2001, ongoing education and outreach programs that publicize the availability of 711 access to TRS in a manner reasonably designed to reach the largest number of consumers possible.

Minnesota Rule 7812.1000 — Annual Notice of Customers Rights

At the time service is initiated, at least annually thereafter, and upon customer request, a local service provider (LSP) shall provide customers with a summary, in plain language, of the rights and obligations of customers as provided in items A to D.

- A. The notice must describe the complaint procedures available through the LSP and the commission, and must indicate that the customer can contact the commission if dissatisfied with the local service provider's resolution of the customer's complaint. The notice must specify the current address and the local and toll-free telephone numbers of the commission's Consumer Affairs office.
- B. The notice must describe the customer's rights regarding the payment of bills, disconnection of service, privacy, deposits, low-income assistance, **programs for people who have hearing loss**, and blocking options.
- C. The notice must summarize the commission's service quality standards and the remedies available to customers for failure to meet those standards.
- D. The notice must specify the price and service options as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 237.66.

Note: **Minnesota Rule 7812.0600** requires that a local service provider shall provide to all of its customers within its service area, as part of its local service offering, with one complete directory per year. Therefore, as all local service providers are required to provide their customers with a telephone directory, you must ensure that the telephone directory includes information on the availability and use of all forms of TRS (Minnesota Relay services).

Do we need to include all of the material listed on the *Information to Include in Customer Annual Notices* in our Annual Notice of Customer Rights?

All of the Minnesota Relay and TED Program material found in the *Information to Include in Customer Annual Notices* or in the *Sample Annual Notice to Customers* must be provided to each residential and business customer annually. How you choose to provide your customers with this information is your discretion. You may include the information in your Annual Notice of Customer Rights, in a bill insert, printed on the customer's bill, in a newsletter, or so forth.

What if we do not send our customers a hardcopy (paper) bill or invoice?

You may send the notice to your residential and business customers in the same format that you provide their customer bill/invoice.

For example, if your customer receives a paperless (electronic) billing, you may send the annual notice to the customer electronically. However, you must send the complete notice, and not just partial information or a link to your website.

Can we send the Department of Commerce a preliminary directory page, bill insert, or newsletter for review and approval prior to publication?

Yes. If you have a draft that you would like us to look at prior to publication, please e-mail an electronic copy to: rochelle.garrow@state.mn.us. We will review the document and notify you whether or not it complies with state and/or federal requirements.

What if we do not publish a telephone directory?

If you are a local service provider, Minnesota Rule 7812.0600 requires, as part of local service offering, that you provide all customers within your service area with one complete directory per year. If you do not publish your own telephone directory, please submit the page(s) containing Minnesota Relay and TED Program information from the telephone directory distributed to your customers.

Do we need to submit the Compliance Form every year?

Yes. You need to submit the *Compliance Form for Annual Notices to Customers* (and proof of compliance if applicable) annually.

Is there a specific date by which we must annually submit the Compliance Form?

No. We understand that carriers distribute telephone directories and bill inserts/newsletters at various dates. We suggest that you establish internal procedures so that you submit the Compliance Form for Annual Notices to Customers at approximately the same time each year.

Who is exempt from the requirement to provide an Annual Notices to Customers?

If you provide service capable of originating a Telecommunications Relay Services (relay) call, *you are not exempt.*

Providers that *are* exempt from state and federal regulations requiring notices to customers include those that:

- Do not have retail end users/local subscribers.
- Only provide dedicated (point-to-point) service.
- Only provide Internet access (no phone service).

Providers who are exempt must still complete the *Compliance Form for Annual Notices to Customers* each year and indicate the reason for exemption.

How do I submit the Compliance Form for Annual Notices to Customers?

You must submit the Compliance Form and any attachments via the electronic filing system at: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/security/login.do?method=showLogin>.

File under Docket Number 19-6 and Document Type: Report. There is no service list for this docket. (If filing for 2017, use Docket Number 17-6.)

In order to submit a document using the eFiling application, you must be a registered user. To register, go to the eFiling Web page and click on Request Registration. Allow at least 24 hours to receive a user ID and password.

What happens if the materials we submit do not meet state and/or federal requirements?

If you submit the *Compliance Form for Annual Notices to Customers* and your Annual Notice to Customers and/or telephone directory page do not meet the state and/or federal requirements, you will be notified of such and will not be considered compliant until correct and complete information is provided to your Minnesota customers.