

STATE OF NEW YORK

2770

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 24, 2023

Introduced by Sen. COMRIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to requiring a phone company to restore service promptly when phone service goes down for someone who uses a medical alert system or a device that transmits medical data

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section
2 91-b to read as follows:

3 § 91-b. Service restoration for consumers using a medical alert system
4 or a device that transmits medical data. 1. Every telephone corporation
5 subject to the provisions of this article shall develop and implement an
6 emergency response plan ensuring the reasonably prompt restoration of
7 telephone services in the event of an outage for customers who utilize a
8 medical alert system or communications equipment, in conjunction with
9 medical devices, to monitor and transmit medical data to their treating
10 physicians' medical sites.

11 2. (a) Each emergency response plan described in subdivision one of
12 this section shall be submitted by the telephone corporation to the
13 commission for review and approval. All such plans shall be submitted
14 annually, on or before December fifteenth.

15 (b) The commission shall review the emergency response plan and notify
16 the telephone corporation of approval or disapproval of the plan within
17 thirty days of receiving the plan. If the plan is disapproved, the
18 commission shall provide the telephone corporation with written notifi-
19 cation of the reasons for the disapproval at the time it notifies the
20 telephone corporation of the disapproval of the plan. The telephone
21 corporation shall revise the plan to address the reasons for disapproval
22 and shall re-submit the plan to the commission within thirty days of

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 receiving notice of the disapproval. The commission shall review the
2 resubmitted plan and notify the telephone corporation of approval or
3 disapproval within fifteen days of receiving the revised plan.

4 3. Each emergency response plan shall include, at a minimum, the
5 following:

6 (a) the name, address and contact information for each customer who
7 has provided written or online documentation of his or her need for
8 telephone service for medical needs during outages;

9 (b) outreach plans to communicate with each customer who has provided
10 written or online documentation of his or her need for telephone service
11 for medical needs during outages;

12 (c) procedures to practice the emergency response plan; and

13 (d) such other additional information as the commission may require.

14 4. Every telephone corporation subject to the provisions of this arti-
15 cle shall:

16 (a) send annually to each residence it serves a form that may be used
17 to notify the telephone corporation that a person living in the resi-
18 dence suffers from life threatening medical conditions which require a
19 medical alert system or the constant use of communications technology to
20 remotely monitor and transmit critical medical data to treating physi-
21 cians; and

22 (b) provide on its website, an easily accessible link for use by its
23 customers for the purpose of notifying the telephone corporation that a
24 person living in the residence suffers from life threatening medical
25 conditions which require a medical alert system or the constant use of
26 communications technology to remotely monitor and transmit critical
27 medical data to treating physicians.

28 5. Notification of the telephone corporation that a person living in a
29 residence suffers from life threatening medical conditions which require
30 a medical alert system or the constant use of communications technology
31 to remotely monitor and transmit critical medical data to treating
32 physicians shall be voluntary. No customer shall be required to provide
33 notification to a telephone corporation unless he or she opts to do so.

34 6. Each telephone corporation shall maintain a current list of its
35 customers who have provided notification to the telephone corporation as
36 provided in subdivision four of this section, and shall include the list
37 in such telephone corporation's emergency response plan. The names,
38 addresses and contact information of customers who provide notification
39 to the telephone corporation as provided in subdivision four of this
40 section shall be added to the list within three business days of the
41 date the telephone corporation receives notice from the customer, either
42 in writing or online. Each customer on the list shall be responsible for
43 notifying the telephone corporation of any changes in the customer's
44 name, address or contact information.

45 7. No telephone corporation shall assign or transfer liability for its
46 obligations under this section to any other person or corporation or
47 contract for any other person or corporation to perform the telephone
48 corporation's duties under this section without the prior written
49 consent of the commission.

50 8. The commission shall supervise, and ensure compliance with the
51 provisions of this section, and shall promulgate rules and regulations
52 it deems necessary to ensure such compliance by telephone corporations
53 with the provisions of this section.

54 9. As used in this section: (a) "telephone corporation" means a tele-
55 phone corporation as defined in section two of this chapter, and also
56 includes providers of internet and cell phone service; and

1 (b) "outage" refers to any disruption in or compromise of telephone
2 service regardless of the reason for such disruption or compromise.
3 § 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
4 it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amend-
5 ment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implemen-
6 tation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and
7 completed on or before such effective date.