



# **Emergency services obligations of publicly available telephone services at fixed locations**

**Consultation and Proposed Decision**

**November 2006**

**Malta Communications Authority**

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## **1 Introduction**

The availability of uninterrupted access to emergency services via telephone is a very important facility that should be made available to users. The Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations, 2004 (hereafter “ECNSR”) establish that an undertaking providing a publicly available telephone service (hereafter “PATS”) at fixed locations shall take all reasonable steps to ensure uninterrupted access to emergency services.

To this end the ECNSR also empower the Authority to specify obligations to be complied with by undertakings providing PATS at fixed locations in order to ensure the continued availability of the service even in adverse circumstances such as a power failure.

Due to the welcome increase in the number of authorised undertakings providing PATS and in order to ensure that users rights are safeguarded, the Malta Communications Authority is consulting on a proposed decision to specify the reasonable conditions that a publicly available telephone service at fixed locations should satisfy in respect of uninterrupted access to emergency services.

## 2 Proposed Emergency Services Obligations

The MCA's proposed obligations applicable to publicly available telephone services at fixed locations in respect of uninterrupted access to emergency services are set out in Appendix A to this document.

**Proposed Decision:**

**The MCA proposes to direct that undertakings forthwith take all reasonable steps in order to ensure uninterrupted access to emergency services by publicly available telephone services at fixed locations as specified in Appendix A.**

### **3 Consultation Framework**

The MCA invites comments from interested parties regarding this Consultation and Proposed Decision.

The consultation period will run until 12:00pm on Friday 1 December 2006.  
Comments should be sent to:

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**APPENDIX A – PROPOSED EMERGENCY SERVICES OBLIGATIONS  
OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE TELEPHONE SERVICES (PATS) AT FIXED LOCATIONS**

Regulation 43 of the Electronic Communications Networks and Services (General) Regulations, 2004 (hereafter “ECNSR”) establishes that an undertaking providing publicly available telephone service at fixed locations shall take all reasonable steps to ensure uninterrupted access to emergency services.

The ECNSR empower the Authority to specify obligations to be complied with by undertakings providing publicly available telephone services at fixed locations in order to ensure, especially in cases of power failure, the continued availability of such services. This is especially applicable to network architectures that require a powered customer premise device.

Under normal operating conditions, access to emergency services will not be a problem. Due to force majeure, in the event of a mains power failure, certain customer premises equipment requiring mains power supply (such as a broadband modem and/or analogue terminal adapter) would cease to operate.

The Authority is therefore directing undertakings to take all reasonable steps to ensure that a publicly available telephone service (hereafter “PATS”) at fixed locations affords uninterrupted access to emergency services<sup>1</sup> at least as follows:

1. In case of a mains power failure the access to emergency services should continue to be provided for at least 3 hours in standby mode;
2. Customer premises equipment requiring mains power supply should be connected to a suitable battery backup device or an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) that is to be installed by the PATS provider;
3. The provision of the battery backup or UPS forms part of the service agreement and the customer is to be informed at the time of initial installation of the consequences of a powering failure;
4. If a customer wishes to self-provide UPS equipment and/or a generator set to ensure continued powering during a mains power failure, the customer may opt do so and assume in writing all responsibility in the event of a mains power failure;
5. Equipment located in the PATS provider’s Network Operations Centre/s must also be serviced by a suitable UPS and a backup generator;
6. A notice, in both Maltese and English, should be attached on the telephone set and the powered equipment stating that customer premises equipment connected to the mains power requires a suitable Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) or battery backup for the purpose of ensuring access to Emergency Services.

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<sup>1</sup> These obligations do not apply in respect of exclusively self-provided powered customer equipment (e.g. a PABX, cordless telephone or fax machine).

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