NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: http://www.fcc.gov
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC. 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 12, 2011

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Lauren Kravetz, (202) 418-7944
Email: lauren.kravetz@fcc.gov

FCC PROMOTES A MORE RESILIENT AND RELIABLE 9-1-1 SYSTEM

Proposes Network Outage Reporting for Interconnected VoIP and Broadband Internet Service Providers

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today took action to make America's 9-1-1 system and other critical communication infrastructure more resilient by proposing that interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service and broadband Internet service providers report significant outages. Specifically, the FCC adopted a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (*NPRM*) that proposes rules under which providers of these services would report outages of at least thirty minutes that meet certain thresholds, helping fulfill the FCC's mission to ensure that our country's critical communications infrastructure remains working in times of crisis. These network outage reports would enable the FCC to track and analyze information on outages affecting 9-1-1 service over broadband networks and determine if action is needed to prevent future outages from occurring.

Broadband technologies delivering communications services are fast becoming substitutes for communications services provided by older, legacy communications technologies. According to the FCC's recent *Local Competition Report*, nearly 30 percent of the more than 89 million residential telephone subscriptions were provided by interconnected VoIP providers. Broadband networks now carry a substantial volume of 9-1-1 traffic and are also a significant form of communications in times of crisis. The *NPRM* proposes to expand outage reporting requirements relating to 9-1-1 to interconnected VoIP providers and broadband Internet service providers that are similar to reporting that has applied to wireless, wireline, cable and satellite communications service providers since 2005.

The FCC's current outage reporting requirements have been successful in reducing the number of communications outages across several categories and speeding the pace of recovery. For instance, within hours of Hurricane Katrina hitting land in 2005, the Commission's outage reporting data quickly became the Federal government's best source of information about the conditions of critical communications infrastructure in the disaster area. Working with communications providers, the FCC was able to identify specific needs for security, fuel, and other support and help guide and prioritize Federal restoration efforts.

The *NPRM* adopted today seeks to extend these benefits to the broadband communications networks frequently used during life threatening situations today. In the past year alone, several regions across the Nation have experienced significant disruptions to their broadband Internet and interconnected VoIP services. This past November, a broadband Internet service provider experienced a network outage that affected more than 40,000 customers across the state of Kansas for approximately 12 hours. Due to the increased reliance on VoIP and broadband technologies by the American public, an outage such as this significantly affects consumers' ability to reach 9-1-1 in an emergency.

The *NPRM* seeks comment on the definition of outage reporting for these services, the proposed reporting thresholds, the effectiveness of mandatory reporting, how the reporting process should work, what information should be reported, and confidential treatment of the outage reports.

Action by the Commission May 12, 2011, by *NPRM* (FCC 11-74). Chairman Genachowski, and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn participated in the meeting. Commissioner Baker did not participate in today's meeting. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn.

PS Docket No. 11-82.

The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) contact is Jeffery Goldthorp at (202) 418-1096 or via email: jeffery.goldthorp@fcc.gov.

-FCC-

For more news and information about the Federal Communications Commission
please visit: www.fcc.gov