

TRAI issues Telecom Tariff (69th Amendment) Order 2022

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The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today issued Telecom Tariff (69th amendment) order 2022 on "Tariff for SMS and Cell Broadcast alerts disseminated through Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) platform during disasters/non-disasters".

Department of Telecom (DoT) has requested TRAI to provide tariff for SMS and Cell Broadcast alerts/messages to be disseminated by TSPs through CAP platform during disasters/non-disasters. DOT allows SMS/Cell Broadcast free of cost only for a definite period and for events where specific request for free of cost messages comes from NEC/NCMC/SEC/Nodal Authorities. However, there are occasions when the Government would like to send alert messages to the public forewarning of a possible disaster or occasions where public has to be informed of special events such as holding of relief/vaccine/medical camps/specific law and order related situations etc.

Accordingly, as per extant practice, TRAI issued a Consultation Paper (C/P) on "Tariff issues related to SMS and Cell Broadcast alerts disseminated through Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) platform during disasters/non-disasters" on 03.11.2021, seeking comments and counter comments from stakeholders by 01.12.2021 and 15.12.2021 respectively. The details of the comments and counter comments received are available on the website www.traigov.in. The Authority has conducted an Open House Discussion (OHD) through video-conferencing mode on the issues raised in the Consultation Paper.

As per deliberations held with stakeholders during consultation process following four possible categories of alerts/messages may be sent through CAP:

Alerts/ messages sent during non-disaster situation which may be on chargeable basis.

Alerts/ messages sent as per DM Act, 2005 prior to notification of disaster which may be on chargeable basis.

Alerts/ messages sent during disaster situation as per DM Act, 2005 and extant SOP which will be free; and

Alerts/messages sent during a disaster situation, other than those sent as per Disaster Management Act 2005.

After considering the views of all stakeholders/ participants and analysis thereof, the Authority inserted Schedule XIII to principal Tariff order, in clause 3 of the Telecommunication Tariff Order, 1999, which provides the following Tariff for Short Message Services (SMS) and Cell Broadcast alerts disseminated by service providers through Common Alerting Protocol platform.

The Authority decided to prescribe Tariff of Rs.0.02 (paise two only) for SMS Alerts/ messages sent during disaster and non-disaster situations, other than those sent as per as per directions issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005).

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Considering the significance of alerts/messages sent as per direction issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005), the Authority has decided that no charges shall be levied for such SMS/Cell Broadcast - Alerts/messages sent either during disaster or prior to notification of disaster or after expiry of disaster.

TSPs shall broadcast messages to all the subscribers through Cell broadcast free of cost during disaster and non-disaster period.

The Explanatory Memorandum attached with Amendment Order details the reasons and rationale for the Telecommunication Tariff (Sixty Ninth Amendment) Order, 2022.

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