



Changes to telemarketing and non-geographic numbers in the UK

Your questions answered

Changes to telemarketing and non-geographic numbers come into effect on 13 June 2014

What's happening?

There's a new EU Consumer Rights Directive that affects consumer facing businesses and requires that post-contract help lines be charged at no more than 'basic' rate. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has responsibility for bringing the EU Directive into UK law as "The Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013".

What does it mean for me?

The regulation applies to POST SALE consumer to business calls only. On or after 13 June 2014, these contact numbers must be either geographic (01/02) or 03x non geographic number.

Premium rate (09xx) and other revenue sharing ranges (e.g. 0844, 0871) will not comply with the new regulation. And 0870 numbers are often charged at higher than geographic rates so would not comply if used for a post sale call. If you want to use an 0870 number, you'll need to charge your customers as if it's a geographic number.

It's also worth remembering that pricing to call chargeable 08 numbers from mobiles is extremely complex and MNOs charge different rates depending on the age of the contract and whether it's a consumer on PAYG or contract or a business user. For now, 0800/0808 numbers will be chargeable from mobiles as usual but regulation is on its way in May 2015 to make things simpler – we're happy to talk you through the changes.

When they say 'basic rate', how do they define it?

It's defined as standard geographic rates (i.e. 01/02/03 numbers), mobile or free to call (0800/0808).

Does this new regulation apply to all post-sale contact numbers?

Not necessarily. The following categories are exempt from the provisions of the regulation:

- Financial Services are exempt – although warranties, credit agreements and insurance products which are offered in conjunction with the sale of non-financial goods will still need to meet regulations. The Government has asked the Financial Services Conduct Authority to consider equivalent regulation and it is expected they will do so.
- Gambling, as covered by the Gambling Act 2005
- Construction & Sale of immovable property
- Residential letting contracts
- Package travel contracts
- Timeshare contracts
- Vending machines and other goods intended for current consumption

Can you make it simple for me?

We can simply substitute an existing 08xx number for the same number beginning 03xx. So only one digit changes for the customer e.g 0844 686785 to 0344 686785.

03 numbers are increasingly popular, and callers pay same charges as calls to 01/02 numbers (local rate) and since 03 numbers are included in many call packages, they will effectively be 'free' from landlines and mobiles. 03 numbers are becoming a 'trusted' number, widely used by charities and public bodies. They are being increasingly adopted by government and pseudo government organisations such as the DVLA and Blood Transfusion Services and by BBC for all listener and viewer contact.

Is there a penalty for non-compliance?

If the cost of the call costs more than a basic rate call, your customers could demand a refund in the difference in price. Any deliberate breaches of the regulation will be investigated and prosecuted by Trading Standards. With consumer groups like Which? and the national press following these type of cases, flouting regulations could cause brand damage.

OK. So what does 'good' look like?

A good solution



Can you help me?

In a word, yes! We offer a broad range of inbound services, so you can use numbers that suit the way you work. Whether that's geographic to suggest a local presence or to earn revenue from the calls you receive. Or appear nationwide by not disclosing the geographic dialling code. We can route calls based on specific activity, when a number's busy or when a contact centre agent's been free for longer than his colleague. Our Virtual Receptionist can answer every call automatically and direct them where they need to go.

And because we back up our portfolio with expert and experience voice specialists able to review end-to-end services and recommend what to do, we can help you decide if you need to re-design your existing services to ensure compliance.

And because our commercial models are fully flexible and our 'manage, optimise and transform' model gives a clear roadmap for voice services, we can highlight cost savings to drive transformation.

We'll support you all the way

Our dedicated specialist technical team gives you the support you need. With regulation changes in June 2014 and May 2015, we can make sure you've got the best numbers for your customers and your organisation's success.



Talk to your Account Manager
to find out more or visit
o2.co.uk/enterprise