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PN-13-01

PUBLIC NOTICE

ACTA Files Petition for Rulemaking to Fortify the Network Protections of Part 68 June 28, 2013

Washington, D.C. – On June 25, 2013 the Administrative Council for Terminal Attachments (ACTA) submitted its Petition for Rulemaking to Fortify the Network Protections of Part 68 to the FCC. In this Petition, the ACTA asks for a modest rule change to clarify the scope of Part 68 in order to ensure that the foundational principles of these rules in protecting the network and the public can continue to be met.

The advent of new types of terminal equipment presents the Industry with additional challenges in the protection of the Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN). As an example, many devices manufactured today are capable of connecting both to the PSTN and to other networks that use Internet Protocol (IP).

The ACTA believes there is a need to clarify the existing rules to safeguard against harm to the PSTN and its personnel potentially caused by multi-connection devices. While the ACTA believes that the current Part 68 rules cover such multi-connection devices that are able to directly connect to the PSTN, there is some confusion in the industry regarding the applicability of the existing rules to multi-connection devices. The ACTA has been approached by manufacturers, consumers, and service providers with questions regarding Part 68 applicability to multi-connection devices. Due to the ambiguous nature of the rules as currently written, the ACTA therefore believes that, many of these devices have not been tested and have not received terminal equipment approval under Part 68.

On that basis, the ACTA asked the Commission to pursue a rule change to Rule 68.3, the definition of terminal equipment, to codify the applicability of Part 68 to devices capable of connecting to the PSTN and other networks. This clarification will protect the telephone network and will ensure that consumers have access to reliable communications, particularly during emergencies. As the ACTA has previously noted, non-compliant telephone terminal equipment may prevent access to communications services, including emergency services (9-1-1).

A full copy of the Petition submitted by ACTA is available at:
http://www.part68.org/documents/resources/Petition_for_Rulemaking_VoIP_Devices.pdf

Questions and comments about this notice should be submitted to the ACTA Secretariat via Email at acta@atis.org, or by phone at +1.202.628.6380

About ACTA

The ACTA is an open organization established to: (1) adopt technical criteria and to act as the clearing-house, publishing technical criteria for terminal equipment developed by ANSI-accredited standards development organizations; and (2) establish and maintain a registration database of equipment approved as compliant with the technical criteria. ACTA is jointly sponsored by the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) and Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA). For more details about ACTA and the registration of TTE equipment to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), visit: www.part68.org.