

## **Competitive Pay Telephone Service Causes Problems in Canada**

*By Judy Broomfield, Toronto Police Service, and Ronald Bonneau, NENA Canadian Regional Vice President*

On a winter night at the Toronto Communications center, an incoming 9-1-1 line rang and was answered. A twelve-year-old boy reported that his father just assaulted his sister and that she was unconscious.

The telecommunicator asked the boy where he was calling from, because the Automatic Location Identification (ALI) didn't appear on the computer screen. The boy didn't know. Although the Automatic Number Identification (ANI) appeared and the phone number was known, the ALI failed to appear. The line with the boy was lost.

After a frantic check with the Incumbent Local Exchange Company (ILEC), the communications center determined the line was resold to an Alternate Local Exchange Company (ALEC). A further check with the ALEC phone company determined the phone line in question was resold to a Competitive Pay Telephone Service Provider (CPTSP). The pay telephone the boy used didn't have the associated location information in the database, and thus no ALI was sent to the center.

Help was never sent.

Judy Broomfield, 9-1-1 Emergency Voice Service Coordinator for Toronto Police Services, stated: "As far as we were concerned, there was a potential victim of child abuse who never got the police protection or medical assistance that may have been needed."

During another incident, in the Toronto Communications center, an incoming 9-1-1 line rang and was answered. The Toronto telecommunicator spoke with a woman who stated she needed an ambulance. The ANI displayed a 403 area code; however, the telecommunicator knew the Toronto area code is 416 and didn't know the location of the 403 area code. Had the call been routed wrong? What happened?

The Toronto telecommunicator quickly learned that the woman caller was actually an operator for an Operator Services business group who had a man suffering from seizures on the line and needed the services available through 9-1-1.

The telecommunicator advised the Operator Services person the call needed to route to the 403 area code and the PSAP associated with it. However, the Operator Services employee also didn't know

where the 403 area code was. She advised the Toronto telecommunicator that she dialed 9-1-1 from her center and was routed to Toronto Communications.

Through an extended process between the Toronto Communications telecommunicator and the operator from the Operator Services business group, the Toronto telecommunicator found that the 403 area code is in Alberta, Canada—more than 2,000 miles away.

The man having the seizure couldn't tell the operator where he was and became unresponsive. Further investigation by the telecommunicator determined that the man having the seizure called from a pay telephone in Calgary, and the location was finally determined.

The 9-1-1 call was subsequently handed from Toronto to Calgary using a long distance, non-emergency phone number. Calgary police then responded and a successful outcome was realized.

These are two examples of the problem cities and towns across Canada are experiencing as a result of Competitive Pay Telephone Service Providers (CPTSP) as well as CPTSP's using Operator Service business groups.

The Canadian Radio Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the Canadian version of the United States' Federal Communications Commission, recognizes that these situations, which do not occur when an ILEC pay phone is used, but sometimes occur when a CPTSP pay phones is used, are critical and must be corrected.

The CRTC CISC Emergency Services (9-1-1) Sub Working Group has held many discussions to determine the solution to the problem of Competitive Payphones and third party Operator Services. The Sub Working group is comprised of industry representatives of various payphone companies and third party operator services, as well as public safety professionals, Local Exchange Carrier representatives and CRTC personnel. Members of the Sub Working group have filed contributions identifying the problem and effective solutions to correct it. The group conducts telephone conference calls on a monthly basis, and posts all interested party contributions on the CRTC web site at [www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/proc-rep/telecom/1997/general/cisf3e4c.htm](http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/proc-rep/telecom/1997/general/cisf3e4c.htm).

The Sub Working group recently held an in-person meeting in Toronto, during which the members reached consensus on Competitive Pay Telephone Service Provider 9-1-1 Rules and Obligations. These rules include:

#### **Operation Requirements:**

1. On each pay telephone, the instructions on how to access the emergency numbers (operator assistance) and 9-1-1 service where applicable must be clearly posted.
2. It is recommended that the pay telephone provides dial tone as soon as the calling party picks up the handset (i.e., it allows the caller to dial 9-1-1 or a "0-Operator Call, where 9-

- 1-1 service is unavailable and to complete the call without the deposit of a coin, credit card or any other device.)
3. The routing to an Operator Services business group, used by the CPTSP, must be capable of providing access to emergency services and/or 9-1-1 where provided, to enable a call to be routed to the correct PSAP.
  4. The pay telephone access line must be connected to the network of a LEC.
  5. The pay telephone access line must be capable of forwarding to the 9-1-1 Selective Router the valid Automatic Number Identification (ANI) assigned to the pay telephone set.
  6. The pay telephone number must be displayed on the pay telephone, to enable the caller to provide it to the 9-1-1 call-taker when requested, in the case of no ANI/ALI delivery on that call.
  7. The pay telephone access line and terminal equipment must be capable of supporting 9-1-1 call control features (Call Hold, Ringback, and Forced Disconnect) where provided, even where no ringer/tone generator is available on the pay telephone set.
  8. If incoming calls are blocked to the pay telephone, in the event of an emergency 9-1-1 call, a warning/information message must be provided to the PSAP indicating that the pay telephone is not equipped to receive incoming calls.

#### **Class of Service:**

1. The Competitive Pay Telephone Service Provider (CPTSP) is required to order and use pay telephone access line types which the underlying LEC identifies with a public telephone class of service (e.g., "PCT" or "PUC" for public coin telephone) as indicated in the ILEC 9-1-1 Interconnection Support Document.

#### **Location Details:**

1. The CPTSP is required to provide up-to-date location information details of the pay telephone access/line equipment, to the LEC providing the dial tone/facilities at the time of ordering and any subsequent moves of the equipment.

This set of rules will apply to all CPTSPs and their service providers. A technical solution related to the proper routing of emergency calls from third party operator services to the correct PSAP remains the final hurdle. The Sub Working group is currently in the process of examining the options. All members have recognized that left unsolved, the number of the types of incidents described would increase with the growth of these competitive industries.

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