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Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association



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Wireless Industry Unveils 10-Point Consumer Code

– Voluntary best practices will educate and inform consumers –

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association (CTIA), in partnership with the nation's wireless carriers, today unveiled a 10-part Consumer Code that enumerates voluntary industry principles, disclosures and practices. The voluntary Consumer Code is designed to help consumers make informed choices when purchasing wireless services, better understand their wireless services and rate plans, and ensure that wireless carriers continue to meet their needs.

“The wireless industry has always been different than other telecomm sectors. It is fast moving, nimble, competitive and proactive. It highly values and vigorously competes for customers,” said Tom Wheeler, President and CEO of CTIA. “This voluntary Consumer Code will help ensure that wireless consumers continue to be the best informed, most knowledgeable consumers in the telecommunications sector.”

“Competition has always served wireless consumers better than costly regulations. Wireless complaint rates are lower than those of more regulated telecom sectors. So, dragging wireless down with heavy regulations is simply old monopolistic think, and only hurts consumers,” added Wheeler. “Wireless has always moved rapidly to address market opportunities and concerns. Once again, we're leading the way with this voluntary Consumer Code and Seal of Wireless Quality/Consumer Information.”

The voluntary Consumer Code includes 10 items. All carriers displaying the new Seal of Wireless Quality/Consumer Information have agreed to abide by each of the following points:

1. Provide every new consumer a minimum 14-day trial period for new service.
2. Provide coverage maps, illustrating where service is generally available.
3. In every advertisement that mentions pricing, specifically disclose the rates and terms of service.
4. For every rate plan or contract, provide consumers specific disclosures regarding rates and terms of service.
5. On billing statements, carriers will not label cost recovery fees or charges as taxes, and will separately identify carrier charges from taxes.
6. When initiating or changing service, carriers will clearly state contract terms to customers and confirm changes in service.
7. Provide customers the right to terminate service for significant changes to contract terms.
8. Provide ready access to customer service.
9. Promptly respond to consumer inquiries and complaints received from government agencies.
10. Abide by policies for the protection of customer privacy.

Large and small wireless carriers are adopting the voluntary Code, including Cingular, AT&T Wireless, Sprint PCS, Nextel, ALLTEL, Verizon Wireless, Western Wireless, Qwest, Centennial Communications, Triton PCS, T-Mobile USA, Dobson Communications, Rural Cellular, Midwest Wireless,

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Southern LINC, Cellcom, First Cellular of Southern Illinois, Illinois Valley Cellular, Cellular One of East Central Illinois, Cellular South, CC Communications, Easterbrook Cellular Corporation and Carolina West Wireless. CTIA expects additional wireless carriers to implement the Code in the coming months as well. For more information on the voluntary Consumer Code and the Seal of Wireless Quality/Consumer Information, please visit www.wow-com.com/consumer/issues.

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CTIA is the international association for the wireless telecommunications industry, representing carriers, manufacturers and wireless Internet providers.

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