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Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS)

Virginia Relay

DIAL 7-1-1

Application for Renewal of Current Certification

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

For the Period July 26, 2008 – July 25, 2013

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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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October 1, 2007

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
445 12th Street, SW, Room 3-A503
Washington, D.C. 20554

Section 51.5-115 of the *Code* of Virginia designates the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) as the oversight agency for telecommunications relay services within our great Commonwealth. With the cooperation and support of the Virginia Relay Advisory Council, we work diligently to ensure our citizens are provided with the latest in relay technology and with the highest quality of relay services. As Director of VDDHH, I am pleased to submit our application for renewal of state certification for our telecommunications relay service program, better known as Virginia Relay.

Since 1991, Virginia has provided traditional relay services from a dedicated, in-state center operated by AT&T. After a two-year trial, we established a contract for unlimited captioned telephone services in 2004 with Sprint Relay. Renewal of our state certification for traditional relay services (including speech-to-speech relay) and CapTel® services are presented in separate sections in our application. Each section includes a narrative and an attached matrix provided by the associated contractor.

We appreciate the support of the FCC's Consumers and Governmental Affairs Bureau and the guidance of the Disability Rights Office in making Virginia Relay a continued success. All questions concerning this application should be directed to VDDHH staff member Clayton E. Bowen at clayton.bowen@vddhh.virginia.gov or at (804) 662-9704, voice/text.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Lanier

Commonwealth of Virginia
State Recertification
October 2007

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State TRS Program Background

At the request of consumer advocacy groups, the 1989 Virginia General Assembly drafted and approved House Joint Resolution 272. This legislative document directed the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) and the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) to study the future of Message Relay Services, later called Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS), in the Commonwealth. Based on the ensuing study, legislation was passed in 1990 that empowered VDDHH, with the technical assistance of the SCC, to provide and operate TRS for all text telephone users in the Commonwealth. Almost seventeen years later. TRS in Virginia is now known as simply Virginia Relay.

Because there were no federal requirements or regulations concerning TRS in 1990, the original legislation established minimum service standards that prevented any limitations or restrictions that were not applicable to voice users of the telephone network. The legislation also included minimum answer rates and provided for adequate facilities and personnel to ensure calls were relayed accurately.

With the advent of Voice Carry-Over (VCO) calls, this *Code* section was amended in 1992 to allow for technological advances and addition of new relay features. This amended language became the basis for a two-year trial of enhanced VCO (CapTel®) service beginning in 2002.

In 2006, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 568 which changed the funding source for the state's relay services from the original surcharge on all residential and business lines in the state to a new communication tax effective January 1, 2007. Collected by the Virginia Department of Taxation, the new tax is applied to all landlines, wireless, internet phone, cable, and satellite services in Virginia. Those funds designated for relay services are now received and directly administered by VDDHH.

Copies of the related Sections of the Code *of Virginia appear as Appendix 1.*

TRS Contract Status

As a result of the original legislation, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued by VDDHH in 1990. An initial contract was signed in the fall of that year with AT&T for a relay center to be established in Norton, an economically disadvantaged area of the state. Over the next few years, both the Virginia General Assembly and VDDHH recognized the advantages of operating a dedicated, in-state center in an area of the state where there had been low employee turnover. In 1996, the General Assembly passed associated budget language authorizing relay operations to remain in Norton. Ensuing RFP negotiations resulted in long-term contract agreements with AT&T to maintain the Norton center.

Our current contract with AT&T was established February 1, 2004 for an initial three-year period with the option for four, one-year extensions. We are approaching the second of the approved extension periods.

A copy of our current AT&T contract and contract modifications appear as Exhibit A.

Captioned Telephone Contract Status

At the request of the Virginia Relay Advisory Council, VDDHH began a two-year trial of captioned telephone services in 2002. The initial trial was limited to 150 participants who received an associated device at no charge. Due to the success of the trial and the interest in the new service by consumer advocacy groups, a related RFP was issued in 2003. As a result, a three-year contract with Sprint Relay for an unlimited number of CapTel participants was signed in April 2004, and we are currently in the first of a possible four contract extension periods.

A copy of our current Sprint Relay contract and contract modifications appear as Exhibit B.

Section 1.

Virginia Relay
Traditional Relay Services
Speech to Speech Relay Services

§64.604

Mandatory Minimum Standards

The standards in this section are applicable December 18, 2000, except as stated in paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(7) of this section.

(a) Operational standards. (1) Communications assistant (CA). (i) TRS providers are responsible for requiring that all CAs be sufficiently trained to effectively meet the specialized communications needs of individuals with hearing and speech disabilities.

In Virginia, the minimum required skills for employment of a CA are:

A minimum typing speed of 60 wpm (FCC mandated requirement)
Spelling and grammatical accuracy at a 12th grade level
Ability to translate typed ASL to English (as measured by a CA proficiency test)
Good pronunciation and voice intonation (speech clarity)
Awareness of deaf community and culture (training developed by AT&T and VDDHH)
Spanish Language Certification (for Spanish Language CA job function only)

(ii) CAs must have competent skills in typing, grammar, spelling, interpretation of typewritten ASL and familiarity with hearing and speech disability cultures, languages and etiquette. CAs must possess clear and articulate voice communications.

Virginia Relay CAs are provided specific instruction on cross-cultural communication, customer service, conversational etiquette, ergonomics and technical development as part of their orientation and on-going training requirements. Virginia Relay CAs are also specially trained to recognize specific speech disabilities and speech patterns to efficiently facilitate Speech-to-Speech calls. Center managers conduct monthly observations of CA workstation performance while a call is in progress. In addition, CAs are required to sign an agreement requiring commitment to respect for the consumer, dedication to assistance and integrity, and demonstration of innovation and teamwork.

Copies of a CA Job Description, Initial CA Training Outline, and CA Commitment Statement Appear as Appendices 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

(iii) CAs must provide a typing speed of a minimum of 60 words per minute. Technological aids may be used to reach the required typing speed. Providers must give oral-to-type tests of CA speed.

To ensure that CAs are meeting the FCC minimum typing requirement of 60 words per minute, an oral-to-type diagnostic is administered to each CA yearly. Currently, all Virginia Relay CAs meet or exceed the minimum FCC typing speed requirement. The average 2007 CA typing speed is 86.76 words per minute with 98.23% accuracy.

(v) CAs answering and placing a TTY-based TRS or VRS call must stay with the call for a minimum of ten minutes. CAs answering and placing an STS call must stay with the call for a minimum of fifteen minutes.

All Virginia Relay CAs are required to stay with a call for at least 10 minutes before an in-call CA transfer can take place. The time for in-call replacement for Speech to Speech calls is a minimum of 15 minutes. In either case, the CA informs both parties of the relief, with the exception of Two Line VCO where only the VCO user is notified of the relief CA. These procedures directly reference the FCC requirement. VDDHH and AT&T also provide CAs with separate guidelines for relief of a CA who is handling a specialist call such as Two Line VCO, VTV, VTT or Speech to Speech. However, the in-call replacement time remains the same for these calls.

Copies of CA procedures for In-Call Replacement and Relief of a CA Handling a Specialty Call appear as Appendices 5 and 6 respectively.

(vi) TRS providers must make best efforts to accommodate a TRS user's requested CA gender when a call is initiated and, if a transfer occurs, at the time the call is transferred to another CA.

All Virginia Relay CAs are required to make every effort to accommodate customer requests for a male or female CA to complete the call. This same diligence is demonstrated when a CA is replaced during the call. CAs are provided with detailed procedures of how to handle such requests and inform the caller of all related actions taken. Below are CA procedures for handling a specific gender request:

- If customer requests CA of a different gender, they are asked to hold while CA checks requested gender availability with In-charge Supervisor
- If the requested gender is available, the CA will say or type, "Thank you for holding. We are able to accommodate your request. I am transferring your call now. One moment please."
- If requested gender is not available, the In-charge supervisor will advise the CA. The CA will say or type, "Thank you for holding. I'm sorry, at this time we do not have a male/female CA available for your call. I would be happy to complete your call for you now, or you may want to try your call later."
- The CA will be guided by the customer's response. If the customer requires further assistance, the CA will courteously advise the customer that he/she will be transfered to the In-charge Supervisor for assistance.

(vii) TRS shall transmit conversations between TTY and voice callers in real time.

Virginia Relay CAs transmits conversations between TTY and voice callers in real time as mandated by the FCC. The standard voice caller communicates with the CA by voice. The CA simultaneously relays the conversation verbatim (including background information and voice tone descriptive words) to the TTY user by typing on a computer keyboard. The operator then reads the response from the TTY user, which appears on the screen of their computer monitor, and voices it to the standard voice user.

Confidentiality of Calls

(2) Confidentiality and conversation content. (i) Except as authorized by section 705 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. 605, CAs are prohibited from disclosing the content of any relayed conversation regardless of content, and with a limited exception for STS CAs, from keeping records of the content of any conversation beyond the duration of a call, even if to do so would be inconsistent with state or local law. STS CAs may retain information from a particular call in order to facilitate the completion of consecutive calls, at the request of the user. The caller may request the STS CA to retain such information, or the CA may ask the caller if he wants the CA to repeat the same information during subsequent calls. The CA may retain the information only for as long as it takes to complete the subsequent calls.

(ii) CAs are prohibited from intentionally altering a relayed conversation and, to the extent that it is not inconsistent with federal, state or local law regarding use of telephone company facilities for illegal purposes, must relay all conversation verbatim unless the relay user specifically requests summarization, or if the user requests interpretation of an ASL call. An STS CA may facilitate the call of an STS user with a speech disability so long as the CA does not interfere with the independence of the user, the user maintains control of the conversation, and the user does not object. Appropriate measures must be taken by relay providers to ensure that confidentiality of VRS users is maintained.

VDDHH and AT&T remain committed to the confidentiality of all relay conversations, regardless of content. As a requirement of their employment, CAs accept a pledge of Confidentiality and must adhere to a strict Code of Ethics. This code also ensures that all conversations are relayed accurately and without counsel, advice, or expression of personal opinions. No records are kept of any call with the exception of Speech to Speech (STS) calls, and only then, at the request of the consumer to facilitate their calls. The CAs retain this information

only for as long as it takes to complete the subsequent calls.

In addition to these measures, Section 8.01-44.3 of the Code of Virginia prohibits the divulgence of communications by qualified interpreters or CAs. Such divulgence is defined as a civil offense punishable by recovery of actual damages or $100, whichever is greater. These stipulations exceed and strengthen the federal requirements for confidentiality and are not in conflict with its original intent.

ASL Translation/Interpretation is the default call transmission for ASL inbound or outbound users unless otherwise specifically directed by the Relay user. This requirement is in compliance with the current Virginia Relay service contract, Attachment H.9 specifically requesting Interpretation of ASL calls handled by Virginia Relay.

Copies of the CA Code of Ethics, Pledge of Confidentiality and Section .01-44.3 of the Code of Virginia appear as Appendices 7, 8, and 9 respectively.

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Types of Calls

(3) Types of calls. (i) Consistent with the obligations of telecommunications carrier operators, CAs are prohibited from refusing single or sequential calls or limiting the length of calls utilizing relay services.

As previously stated, original legislation established minimum service standards in Virginia that prevented any limitations or restrictions that were not applicable to voice users of the telephone network.

Attachment H.3 of the current Virginia Relay service contract also prohibits AT&T from imposing any limits or restrictions not applicable to voice users such as sequential calls or limiting the length of a relay call.

(ii) Relay services shall be capable of handling any type of call normally provided by telecommunications carriers unless the Commission determines that it is not technologically feasible to do so. Relay service providers have the burden of proving the infeasibility of handling any type of call.

Currently, the Virginia Relay Center processes the following types of relay calls:

Text to Voice	Voice to Text	Voice to Voice
Text to VCO	VCO to Text	VCO to HCO
VCO with Privacy	Hearing to Hearing	HCO to VCO
Text to HCO	HCO with Privacy	Speech to Speech
HCO to Text	Two Line VCO	Spanish to Spanish
VCO to VCO	HCO to HCO	Two Line HCO
Pay per Call (900 calls)		

In addition to the above call types, Virginia Relay provides TTY to TTY with Voice Intercept (TTVI) relay calls. This call type assists one TTY user trying to reach another TTY user with the assistance of a CA, such as terminating to a hotel or hospital switchboard. Once the switchboard transfers the call to the requested extension and another TTY connects, the call becomes a TTY to TTY connection. A TTVI relay call also is used to place TTY to TTY calls using a prepaid calling card where voice intercept is required to enter a PIN or other information for connecting the call.

In direct response to residents wanting to use Virginia Relay while traveling to other states, VDDHH has allowed the out-of-state use of Virginia Relay since 1999. Instead of dialing 7-1-1, individuals can use toll free numbers to access the Virginia center. This portability of the service also prevents billing problems associated with wireless 7-1-1 access where a caller's ANI may not appear as a Virginia area code.

A listing of relay call types is also included in the current Virginia Relay service contract, Attachment A.

(iii) Relay service providers are permitted to decline to complete a call because credit authorization is denied.

The Virginia Relay Service will decline relay calls where appropriate calling/credit card information cannot be obtained or when collect charges are denied. In these instances the relay caller is asked if they would like to bill their call in an alternate way.

(iv) Relay services shall be capable of handling pay-per-call calls.

Virginia Relay currently meets all FCC and Commonwealth requirements regarding the processing of relay pay per call services. In addition, AT&T is the only relay provider that allows customers to access pay per call services via 711 dialing. This capability is afforded by our state-of-the-art relay platform, which is able to pass a customer's number (ANI) to the network for direct billing at the pay-per-call provider's established rates. Consequently, Virginia Relay users are able to make outbound relay calls to pay-per-call services in their mode of choice, i.e., multiple state and national toll free 8YY, 900, 711, 211, or 511 numbers.

(v) TRS providers are required to provide the following types of TRS calls: (1) Text-to-voice and voice-to-text; (2) VCO, two-line VCO, VCO-to-TTY, and VCO-to-VCO; (3) HCO, two-line HCO, HCO-to-TTY, HCO-to-HCO.

Virginia Relay Service is fully compliant with this requirement, and can complete all of these calls as previously indicated. (See list provided 3.ii)

(vi) TRS providers are required to provide the following features: (1) Call release functionality; (2) speed dialing functionality; and (3) three-way calling functionality.

Virginia Relay Service provides these features to all relay users, via the AT&T Relay platform technology. CAs can "release" TTY-TTY calls after connection as required, as well as speed dialing via personalized frequently-called numbers lists requested by customers. Additionally, Virginia Relay users enjoy three-way calling any time via the use of their flash button, with the CA then relaying the three-way call.

(vii) Voice mail and interactive menus. CAs must alert the TRS user to the presence of a recorded message and interactive menu through a hot key on the CA's terminal. The hot key will send text from the CA to the consumer's TTY indicating that a recording or interactive menu has been encountered. Relay providers shall electronically capture recorded messages and retain them for the length of the call. Relay providers may not impose any charges for additional calls, which must be made by the relay user in order to complete calls involving recorded or interactive messages.

Since May 2002, all Virginia Relay center CA workstations have been equipped with an AT&T proprietary play back device to capture audio messages, recordings, or interactive voice systems. The relay user is immediately informed by a CA "hot key" that an answering machine, a pre-recorded message or a multiple choice voice menu has been encountered. The CA is able to record the information and facilitate the relay of the information. This allows Virginia Relay to provide, as a TRS feature, answering machine and voice mail retrieval. This same procedure can also be used with the relay of pay-per-call (e.g. 900, 976 calls). No records are kept of such calls as recordings are retained and used for each specific call. In the event a second call is required to retrieve messages or respond to menu systems, there is no additional charge to the relay user.

A copy of CA procedures for using a Play Back Device appears as Appendix 10.

(viii) TRS providers shall provide, as TRS features, answering machine and voice mail retrieval.

Virginia Relay has the ability to retrieve messages from answering machines at the same location or from remote location answering machines. This procedure is called Single Line Answering Machine (Slam). Special training for SLAM calls include:

- Requesting any access codes or passwords in advance
- Following all instructions
- Informing the customer fully of the progress of the call

Virginia Relay can also provide the TTY user answering machine messages when the customer requests that the messages be retrieved by laying his/her phone down by the answering machine. The CA instructs the TTY user to turn on the answering machine and lay the phone near it. Once all messages have been retrieved, they are then typed to the TTY user.

Emergency Calls

(4) Handling of emergency calls. Providers must use a system for incoming emergency calls that, at a minimum, automatically and immediately transfers the caller to an appropriate Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). An appropriate PSAP is either a PSAP that the caller would have reached if he had dialed 911 directly, or a PSAP that is capable of enabling the dispatch of emergency services to the caller in an expeditious manner.

Virginia Relay emergency call handling procedures are currently compliant and in accordance with the FCC requirements as mandated in FCC Order 03-121 released on June 16, 2003.

AT&T provides Virginia Relay CAs with immediate and direct access to a database that contains emergency agency listings based on the caller's Automatic Number Identification (ANI). Using

the caller's ANI, the CA can quickly secure the appropriate emergency agency listing and complete the relay call allowing for immediate emergency attention. Upon identification or receipt of the emergency number, the CA performs only two key strokes to initiate the call to the emergency agency. With Caller ID technology, the emergency agency will automatically receive the ANI of the relay caller, eliminating the need for the CA to manually pass this information.

Once the appropriate emergency agency answers, the CA informs the dispatcher that the call is coming through the relay service and indicates whether the call is voice or TTY. The CA remains available to the emergency agency to provide any additional assistance as necessary or required in order to ensure the rendering of immediate emergency service. Each emergency call is given the Relay Operator's undivided attention. Typically, a supervisor will be immediately assigned to work with the Relay Operator in any emergency call situation. Calls to authorized emergency agencies (police, fire, ambulance, etc.) are completed free of charge to the caller. In the event of a critical situation, CAs are also offered a
debriefing opportunity with their supervisor after the call is completed. Under no circumstances are emergency calls transferred to another workstation.

Information on emergency calls is included in the VA Relay brochures. The brochures state "Relay Service is not a substitute for 911 emergency services; however, if we receive an emergency call, we will do whatever we can to connect the caller to the emergency service needed. To make sure your emergency call is handled as quickly as possible, please call your local emergency service number directly."

Speech to Speech Calls

(5) STS called numbers. Relay providers must offer STS users the option to maintain at the relay center a list of names and telephone numbers which the STS user calls. When the STS user requests one of these names, the CA must repeat the name and state the telephone number to the STS user. This information must be transferred to any new STS provider.

All Virginia Relay CAs are provided training and methodology for processing Speech to Speech (STS) relay calls. STS training consists of an introduction to the history of the service, practice on methods and procedures for this call type, presentation of a video with noted STS founder and advocate Dr. Bob Segalman using listening skills that enable the CA to understand what he is saying. CAs are then required to listen to recordings of people with different speech disabilities and practice placing STS calls. At the time this document is being prepared, all STS calls in AT&T's network are being routed to the Virginia Relay center.

Through our VDDHH agency Outreach Program, all new STS users are strongly encouraged to set-up a confidential Relay Choice Profile (RCP) prior to placing their first call. Recognizing the STS caller's ANI, the RCP automatically identifies the caller as a STS user and allows them to store up to 20 frequently called numbers by party name in their profile. Appearing as a small window on the CA screen, the RCP is convenient for both the STS caller and the CA, and facilitates the set-up of STS sequence calls.

Additional information on RCP usage and portability appears under§64.604.C.7

Currently VDDHH includes information on STS in all materials and presentations on Virginia Relay. During the summer of 2007, we launched a STS awareness campaign to audiologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and associated consumer groups. The campaign was

kicked-off at the August 21, 2007 VRAC meeting by noted STS advocate Rebecca Ladew who gave moving testimony related to the need and benefit of the service. An interview with Ms. Ladew also appears in the Summer/Fall issue of the VA Relay Newsletter, *The Commonwealth Caller.*

Examples of recent STS educational efforts flyer appear as Appendix 11.

Technical Standards

(b) Technical standards. (1) ASCII and Baudot. TRS shall be capable of communicating with ASCII and Baudot format, at any speed generally in use.

Virginia Relay's transmission circuits meet or exceed FCC and Inter-exchange Carrier performance standards. Virginia Relay is capable of communications in Baudot format at a speed of 45.5, in Turbo Code at a speed of 100, and at an ASCII speed of 300-2400 words per minute. Requirements for Baudot, ASCII, and Turbo Code appear in Attachment C.2.b and C.2.e of the current Virginia Relay service contract.

(2) Speed of answer. (i) TRS providers shall ensure adequate TRS facility staffing to provide callers with efficient access under projected calling volumes, so that the probability of a busy response due to CA unavailability shall be functionally equivalent to what a voice caller would experience in attempting to reach a party through the voice telephone network.

(iii) TRS facilities shall, except during network failure, answer 85% of all calls within 10 seconds by any method which results in the caller's call immediately being placed, not put in a queue or on hold. The ten seconds begins at the time the call is delivered to the TRS facility's network. A TRS facility shall ensure that adequate network facilities shall be used in conjunction with TRS so that under projected calling volume the probability of a busy response due to loop trunk congestion shall be functionally equivalent to what a voice caller would experience in attempting to reach a party through the voice telephone network.

(A) The call is considered delivered when the TRS facility's equipment accepts the call from the local exchange carrier (LEC) and the public switched network actually delivers the call to the TRS facility.

(B) Abandoned calls shall be included in the speed-of-answer calculation.

(C) A TRS provider's compliance with this rule shall be measured on a daily basis.

(D) The system shall be designed to a P.01 standard.

(E) A LEC shall provide the call attempt rates and the rates of calls blocked between the LEC and the TRS facility to relay administrators and TRS providers upon request.

Virginia Relay currently maintains adequate employee staffing to ensure that, under projected call volumes, the probability of a busy response due to CA unavailability will be equivalent to what a voice caller would experience in attempting to reach a party through the voice telephone network.

The Virginia Relay service contract, Attachment H.5 requires that CAs must answer 85% of all incoming calls in 10 seconds. The call is considered delivered when Virginia Relay equipment accepts the call from the local exchange carrier (LEC) and the public switched network actually delivers the call to the Virginia Relay Center. Abandoned calls, per FCC mandate, are included in this calculation.
The following table shows the reported speed of answer data for the past five calendar years:

Calendar Year	Answered in 10 sec. (%)	Average Speed of Answer (sec)	Calculation Method
2003	93%	4.20	Daily Average
2004	94%	3.70	Daily Average
2005	97%	1.66	Daily Average
2006	99%	0.59	Daily Average
2007**	99%	0.45	Daily Average

** Reflects data for Jan 2007 through July 2007.

Beginning in February 2004, the Virginia Relay service contract, Attachments H.4 and H.6 also require that Virginia Relay center's platform be engineered for a P.01 grade of service, wherein blockage rate will be measured by sampling the number of calls being blocked for each 24 hour period. If a call rings or is in queue/hold in excess of 90 seconds, it is to be considered a blocked call. Virginia Relay provides VDDHH with Call Blocking rate information on a daily basis. Reports of less than 1 in 100, the functional equivalent of the blockage rate for voice users, indicate Virginia Relays full compliance with the FCC requirement for a P.01 standard.

Calendar Year	Block Rate	Speed of Answer (sec)	Calculation Method
2003	N/A	4.20	Daily Average
2004	1.16*	3.70	Daily Average
2005	0.46	1.66	Daily Average
2006	0.17	0.59	Daily Average
2007**	0.11	0.45	Daily Average

* Reflects data for February 2004 through December 2004
** Reflects data for January 2007 through July 2007.

(3) Equal access to interexchange carriers. TRS users shall have access to their chosen interexchange carrier through the TRS, and to all other operator services, to the same extent that such access is provided to voice users.

Relay user access to a preferred interexchange carrier (IXC), more commonly referred to as Carrier of Choice (COC), has improved dramatically over the past five years. Currently Virginia Relay callers have access to the following IXCs:

AT&T	Adelphia	Allegiance	Alliance	Amerivision
BellSouth	BroadWing	BusTelecom	CloseCall	CirChoie5TK
ComTech	CoreComm	Cox (Bus)	Cox (Res)	Eastern Tel
Easton	Excel	Excel1010	Frontier	GlobalCrossing
I-Link	Incomnet	LD Whse	LDDS	LDM Sys
LightYear	MCI	Matrix Tel	MetroMedia	North Amer
OneCall	OpenBand	OpexLD	Pembroke	PhoneTel
Primus Tel	Qwest	SBC	Sprint	TalkAmerica
Telecom	Touch1	Vartec	Verizon	V2 Verizon
VSS1	Wiltel	WorldXchg	Worldwide	Z-Tel
Zone Tel	ZoneTel			

Virginia Relay also provides relay callers with access to all popular "dial-around" long distance services. In the event a requested IXC is not part of the current TRS COC platform, AT&T provides equal access through the Industry Standard COC Application Process. VDDHH, SCC, and AT&T also provide follow-up to ensure the IXC has made the proper connections at the LEC access tandems in order to join the TRS COC platform in a timely manner.

(4) TRS facilities. (i) TRS shall operate every day, 24 hours a day. Relay services that are not mandated by this Commission need not be provided every day, 24 hours a day, except VRS.

(ii) TRS shall have redundancy features functionally equivalent to the equipment in normal central offices, including uninterruptible power for emergency use.

Section 56-484.5 of the *Code* of Virginia mandates twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week statewide access of TRS with no limitations or restrictions that are not applicable to voice users of the telephone network. Attachment H.1 of our current Virginia Relay service contract also requires relay operations 24 hours a day, 7days per week, and 365 days a year. Attachment C.2.1.iii.b of the current Virginia Relay service contract includes language requiring an

uninterruptible power source (UPS) and adequate network facilities to maintain the required P.01 grade of service. Virginia Relay is equipped with an on-site generator capable of supplying all of the electrical needs for the Relay center in the unlikely event that the existing power source becomes inoperable. The center's generator is exercised regularly to ensure functionality and the fuel source is measured monthly. There is sufficient fuel stored on-site to provide in excess of 24 hours of continuous operator of the generator before refueling is necessary.

During those instances that electrical power is lost to the Virginia Relay Center, all of the critical equipment including the switch, back-office equipment, modems, operator positions, HVAC, lights and security equipment is automatically switched from commercial electrical power to UPS supplied power. The Virginia Relay Center is equipped with sufficient UPS units to provide electricity until the generator reaches full output capacity, generally less than one (1) minute.

The Virginia Relay center is located in Norton, Virginia and receives 100% of the relay traffic originating in the state and currently, provides STS calls for all other AT&T states. Attachment C.2.1.ii of the current Virginia Relay service contract mandates that a Disaster Recovery Plan be in place for responses to all potential natural and man-made causes of system failures. Disaster preparedness is of highest concern for AT&T, and AT&T is widely recognized for their ability to provide emergency operators and uninterruptible power. As a result, we have been able to sustain fully adequate service levels during blizzards, flooding and other acts of nature, as well as a significant power outage that impacted the Eastern US in August 2003. Other relay providers have in fact contracted with AT&T to act as their service and disaster recovery back up system. A Disaster Recovery Plan remains in effect for Virginia Relay and is reviewed by VDDHH and AT&T on a regular basis. AT&T reviews the plan and escalation process every six months to ensure that all potential interruptions of service are addressed. The plan also includes employee protection and maintenance of external links of communication as well as internal operations.

VDDHH and AT&T agreed that service recovery procedures, where calls are transferred to another AT&T relay center, can occur only in specific situations. These situations include the complete shutdown of the Norton center, unexpectedly high relay traffic due to severe weather conditions, national disasters, acts of God, or other unavoidable causes not attributable to AT&T's fault or negligence. AT&T makes every effort to notify VDDHH of any anticipated periods of service recovery prior to the rerouting of traffic to another state center.

In the event that traffic must be rerouted, AT&T has implemented the AT&T Resource Manager (ARM™), an Intelligent Call Routing System as documented in Attachment C.2.1.iii.c of the current Service Provider contract. ARM™ is a software-based processing application offering call-by-call routing to geographically distributed call centers. This system utilizes real-time call handling and relay operator status data in routing every call.

ARM™ has a 7-day, 24-hour support center that automatically detects a failure and takes the necessary steps to rectify the situation. In addition to the automatic call distribution designed into ARM™ to circumvent an isolated call center, AT&T has deployed a fully redundant ARM™ in a second location to ensure that if a disaster were to render the primary ARM™ inoperable the backup ARM™ would continue to manage the call flow and route Virginia Relay to any of the inter-connected, geographically dispersed AT&T Relay Centers without interruption.

A non-proprietary copy of the AT&T Emergency Action Plan appears as Appendix 12.

Enhanced Technology

(5) Technology. No regulation set forth in this subpart is intended to discourage or impair the development of improved technology that fosters the availability of telecommunications to person with disabilities. TRS facilities are permitted to use SS7 technology or any other type of similar technology to enhance the functional equivalency and quality of TRS. TRS facilities that utilize SS7 technology shall be subject to the Calling Party Telephone Number rules set forth at 47 CFR 64.1600 et seq.

(6) Caller ID. When a TRS facility is able to transmit any calling party identifying information to the public network, the TRS facility must pass through, to the called party, at least one of the following: the number of the TRS facility, 711, or the 10-digit number of the calling party.

Since 1992 when VDDHH asked the General Assembly to amend the *Code* of Virginia to include "technological advances" such as VCO calls, VDDHH and AT&T have worked with consumers to identify and incorporate the latest in technology and relay features for users of Virginia Relay. Examples previously referenced in this document include Turbo Code, TTVI relay calls, and the availability of true caller ID for relay calls. Enhanced VCO (CapTel) services have been offered in the state on an unlimited basis since April 2004. More recently VA Relay has offered in-state text to voice messaging for use with wireless devices, established formal procedures for scheduling and processing conference calls, and established VRS demonstration sites in every region of the state.

In 2004, new Virginia Relay contract service offerings were added that improved communication. The first was Speech-to-Speech (STS) with Privacy. Speech-to-Speech users have the option of a call-in-progress privacy feature whenever they are speaking to an operator. The party called will not be able to hear this portion of the conversation. Full audio communication is restored as the specially-trained operator re-voices the conversation to the party called. This meets the current Virginia Relay service contract requirement outline in Attachment B.8.1.vii.

The second feature that was introduced and offered in 2004 was In-bound International relay call. Customers are able to access Virginia Relay directly from other countries by dialing (276)679-5968. Such calls must terminate in Virginia and there will be no charge for the intrastate portion of the relay call. This meets the current Virginia Relay service contract requirements stated in Attachment C.2.k.

The third feature offered in 2004 was Call Forwarding. TTY users who subscribe to Call Forwarding services from their local telephone company can utilize and activate this feature through Virginia Relay. To use this service, TTY users access the designated Call Forwarding number (888) 477-0655 and notify Virginia Relay of an alternate number where they can be reached. TTY users who have call forwarding and a second line in their home can also use this feature to automatically route their incoming calls through relay. This meets the current Virginia Relay service contract requirements stated in Attachment N.1.

In February 2005, 5-1-1 and 2-1-1 service offerings were fully implemented, to ensure FCC compliance and customer needs were met. 5-1-1 Virginia Traffic and Travel Service provides various types of information including traffic and travel alerts, road construction, current weather conditions, transportation, travel and tourism, etc. 2-1-1 is the national abbreviated dialing code for free access to local health and human services information and referral.

In March 2005, Virginia became the second state to enroll its relay center in to the FCC's Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program. The FCC initially established the TSP

Program in 1988 to establish a priority of restoration of telephone service to critical facilities and agencies, at a time when telecommunications repair companies are typically overburdened with service requests. The program presently restores telephone services most critical to national and homeland security on a priority basis in the event of a national crisis. Since that time, the FCC has partnered with the Department of Homeland Security to increase TSP participation. With the program successfully implemented, Virginia Relay users are able to make and receive calls in emergencies, just like standard telephone users in the same calling areas.

In September 2006, AT&T worked in conjunction with the Virginia Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to conduct trials of three new/expanded services, as agreed upon for the Virginia Relay services contract. Upon completion of each successful trial, Communications Assistants have been fully trained and are prepared to assist customers with the following features:

Beginning June 2004, Virginia customers with hearing and speech disabilities were able to contact the Virginia Relay Center in non-routine situations by initiating a relay call using only portable/wireless text-messaging devices. Such a connection also required the center to accept incoming text messages via an email address. This service allows customers to contact a person that does not have a two-way pager or computer access. TTY and Voice customers can initiate the Text Messaging Service by dialing 711 or the dedicated 800 numbers to Traditional Relay.

Since many newer models of two-way text pagers having the ability to send and receive e-mail messages, the Commonwealth of Virginia asked AT&T Relay to facilitate this type of communication in situations where no other communication options are available to the customer. This would be a situation in which the only communication tool available to the customer is a two-way pager or a wireless device, and the person needing to be contacted does not have a two-way pager or computer access. The relay customers initiating and receiving the Text Message must be located within the State of Virginia.

Initially, the service was available from nine to five, Monday through Friday. Since being implemented, the service has been very successful; therefore, Virginia Relay Text Messaging Service has been extended twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year. This meets current relay service contract Modification #1 requirements regarding "Relay Calls Received via Text-Messaging Equipment".

The Virginia Relay Service is now providing more information to relay users related to voice emotion and feeling expressed during the relay call. CAs convey what they hear from voice persons prefaced by "sounds" so that the customer knows the CA is sharing their observation regarding the customer's emotion or feeling expressed through voice tone and manner. The TTY customer will not have to ask for this service, it will automatically be provided by the CA. This meets current relay service contract Modification #1 requirements regarding "Keep the User Informed".

Virginia Relay Conferencing Service is available to schedule calls 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. This service is only available for customers within the State of Virginia and customers must call the Virginia Customer Care number at least 48 hours in advance of the conference call to make an appointment for the service. The customer must provide the Customer Care Representative with the date and time of the call to determine if the call can be scheduled, since the relay conferencing service can only accommodate four calls per day. If the call can be scheduled, the customer will be asked for additional information such as names, terminology, expected duration of the call, etc. The representative asks these questions so the Center will be

prepared for the customer's call, and process it with as much speed and accuracy as possible. This meets current relay service contract Modification #1, Attachment N.5.

Per FCC mandate, Virginia Relay has incorporated the latest technology and support equivalent to all standard phone services. These services include Automated Number Identification (ANI), true Caller ID, call forwarding, speed dialing and other service enhancements which increase the functional equivalency of the Relay Service for all calls, both carried on the provider's network or sent out to inter-exchange (IXC) networks.

Virginia Relay Service currently provides true caller ID to all users, via AT&T's relay architecture. As required, the relay platform can pass to the called party the caller's id, provided they have not elected to block their number. Virginia Relay is fully compliant with this requirement.

Functional Standards

(c) Functional standards. (1) Consumer complaint logs.(i) States and interstate providers must maintain a log of consumer complaints including all complaints about TRS in the state, whether filed with the TRS provider or the State, and must retain the log until the next application for certification is granted. The log shall include, at a minimum, the date the complaint was filed, the nature of the complaint, the date of resolution, and an explanation of the resolution.

(ii) Beginning July 1, 2002, states and TRS providers shall submit summaries of logs indicating the number of complaints received for the 12-month period ending May 31 to the Commission by July 1 of each year. Summaries of logs submitted to the Commission on July 1, 2001 shall

indicate the number of complaints received from the date of OMB approval through May 31, 2001.

(2) Contact persons. Beginning on June 30, 2000, State TRS Programs, interstate TRS providers, and TRS providers that have state contracts must submit to the Commission a contact person and/or office for TRS consumer information and complaints about a certified State TRS Program's provision of intrastate TRS, or, as appropriate, about the TRS provider's service. This submission must include, at a minimum, the following:

(i) The name and address of the office that receives complaints, grievances, inquiries, and suggestions;

(ii) Voice and TTY telephone numbers, fax number, e-mail address, and web address; and

(iii) The physical address to which correspondence should be sent.

Virginia Relay Service maintains full compliance with all FCC regulations by maintenance of an annual log of consumer complaints, inquiries, and commendations concerning Virginia Relay. All feedback from the consumers of Virginia Relay is recorded in AT&T's automated Commendation, Inquiry, and Complaint System, more commonly referred to as CICS. All comments are entered into the CICS database within twenty-four hours of receipt, whether received by AT&T directly or provided through VDDHH. AT&T is then required to forward

VDDHH an electronic copy of each entry within the ensuing twenty-four hour period. The majority of CICS complaints received by AT&T are responded to and resolved by the Virginia Customer Care Desk located within the center. For complaints received directly by VDDHH, staff provides the response to the consumer in many cases. A copy of the consumer's comments is electronically forwarded to AT&T for CICS entry, appropriate documentation, and follow-up.

VDDHH maintains and reconciles the monthly CICS report summary provided by AT&T. Staff immediately investigates any complaints not indicating resolution during the month in question. Since June of 2002, any CICS entry related to an alleged violation of FCC TRS standards or of more stringent Virginia contract requirements is identified and filed separately. This allows for a clear annual accounting of specific complaints related to FCC or state contract requirements. These complaints are also noted in the required annual FCC Complaint Log. All CICS entries and monthly reports are retained by VDDHH for a minimum of five years.

Copies of our Annual Consumer Complaint Logs for 2003-2007 appear as Exhibits C through G respectively.

All complaints, grievances, inquiries, suggestions and commendations for Virginia Relay should be addressed to the VDDHH TRS Administrator:

Clayton E. Bowen, Relay and Technology Programs Manager
Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 203
Richmond, Virginia 23229-5012
(800) 552-7917, voice & text
(804) 662-9704, voice & text
(804) 662-9718, fax
Clayton.Bowen@vddhh.virginia.gov

Public Access to TRS Information

(3) Public access to information. Carriers, through publication in their directories, periodic billing inserts, placement of TRS instructions in telephone directories, through directory assistance services, and incorporation of TTY numbers in telephone directories, shall assure that callers in their service areas are aware of the availability and use of all forms of TRS. Efforts to educate the public about TRS should extend to all segments of the public, including individuals who are hard of hearing, speech disabled, and senior citizens as well as members of the general population. In addition, each common carrier providing telephone voice transmission services shall conduct, not later than October 1, 2001, ongoing education and outreach programs that publicize the availability of 711 access to TRS in a manner reasonably designed to reach the largest number of consumers possible.

The Virginia State Corporation Commission requires phone companies to publish public information on the Virginia Relay service in the front of all local telephone directories. The directory information page also includes reference to 7-1-1 relay access and the confidentiality of calls. In their June 1, 2000 Order #PUC000045 related to three-digit relay dialing, the SCC required associated billing inserts that described the service, the availability of 7-1-1, and the difference between 7-1-1 and 9-1-1 be disseminated by all local phone companies by August 31, 2000. In all cases Virginia Relay is presented as a telecommunications service available and beneficial to both text-users and standard telephone users.

In addition to directory information, the VDDHH Outreach Program has provided public access to information on Virginia Relay since 1991. Currently composed of two full-time staff and 16 contracted specialists, the statewide program provides as part of its on-going efforts relay education and training to businesses, consumer organizations, and public safety personnel. Current VDDHH Outreach contracts require annual Relay Forums and at least one Relay workshop be conducted in each of the state's Planning Districts. Of the $500,000 currently budgeted for the VDDHH Outreach program, approximately $40,000 is provided from the state's TRS fund.

Since October of 2002, the Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) has provided oversight for the state's $250,000 educational and technical assistance campaign to provide public access to information on Virginia Relay. The VRAC sets campaign priorities on a fiscal year schedule and monitors campaign progress on a quarterly basis. For fiscal years 2003 and 2004, a public awareness campaign was launched with the rollout of brochures, print ads, and television commercials. The campaign was amended in mid fiscal year 2004 to include a more directed focus on outreach efforts to seniors and potential VCO users. For fiscal year 2005, the focus was on the appropriate use of 7-1-1 and 911, and information and trainings to Virginia's 135 Public Safety Answering Points re the acceptance of TTY, VCO, CapTel, and emergency relay calls. In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, the Virginia Relay Partner campaign was conducted where businesses were contacted and encouraged to sign-up as a partner for receipt of relay calls. In turn, contact information for and the types of products or services provided by their business or organization is listed on a website where relay users can access. As of June 30, 2007, there were 347 active VA Relay Partners. For fiscal year 2008, we will launch the *Kids Keeping in Touch* curriculum for grades 3 through 5 in the state's 1037 public elementary schools. The curriculum provides students with an introduction to hearing disabilities, sign language, relay services, and related technology and meets all current Standards of Learning (SOLs) for the state. The curriculum also

includes a recently produced DVD on the use of Virginia Relay and will offer the technical support of the VDDHH Outreach network to elementary school teachers during presentation of the curriculum.

Virginia Relay also publishes and disseminates a semi-annual newsletter, *The Commonwealth Caller*. The newsletter focuses on new calling features and technology, current service issues, and information on contacting VDDHH staff, agency Outreach, and their local VRAC representative. Recent issues have also included information on the Virginia Relay Partners Program, appropriate placement of emergency calls, and information on STS services. We also partner with Ultratec to distribute quarterly issues of *CapTel News* which provides helpful hints for people who use CapTel relay services.

Copies of a sample telephone bill and directory page are presented together as Appendix 13. A copy of Order # PUC000045 appears as Appendix 14. A copy of the VRAC By-Laws appears as Appendix 16. Copies of recent VA Relay Outreach Materials appear collectively as Exhibit H.

Rates

(4) Rates. TRS users shall pay rates no greater than the rates paid for functionally equivalent voice communication services with respect to such factors as the duration of the call, the time of day, and the distance from the point of origination to the point of termination.

Just prior to the establishment of our original relay contract, the SCC issued Order #PUC900029 ensuring relay callers would pay no greater rates (than standard telephone users) for functionally

equivalent voice communication services. Currently, a tariff is in place providing relay users an economical maximum rate of $0.07 per minute on AT&T long distance calls. In addition, the Order required a discount be provided on all intrastate direct-dialed TTY-TTY calls. This discount of at least 40% daytime and at least 60% evening/night/weekend/holiday time remains in effect. This discount is referenced in Section F., Items 9 & 10 of our current contract.

A copy of Order # PUC900029 appears as Appendix 16, including an excerpt from the tariff addressing the billing.

Jurisdictional Separation of Costs

(5) Jurisdictional separation of costs—(i) General. Where appropriate, costs of providing TRS shall be separated in accordance with the jurisdictional separation procedures and standards set forth in the Commission's regulations adopted pursuant to section 410 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

(ii) Cost recovery. Costs caused by interstate TRS shall be recovered from all subscribers for every interstate service, utilizing a shared-funding cost recovery mechanism. Except as noted in this paragraph, with respect to VRS, costs caused by intrastate TRS shall be recovered from the intrastate jurisdiction. In a state that has a certified program under §64.605, the state agency providing TRS shall, through the state's regulatory agency, permit a common carrier to recover costs incurred in providing TRS by a method consistent with the requirements of this section. Costs caused by the provision of interstate and intrastate VRS shall be recovered from all subscribers for every interstate service, utilizing a shared-funding cost recovery mechanism.

(iii) Telecommunications Relay Services Fund. Effective July 26, 1993, an Interstate Cost Recovery Plan, hereinafter referred to as the TRS Fund, shall be administered by an entity selected by the Commission (administrator). The initial administrator, for an interim period, will be the National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc.

Costs for intrastate relay call minutes are supported by a state Communications Tax as outlined in §58.1-662 of the *Code* of Virginia. This tax appears on all landline, wireless, internet long distance, cable and satellite bills. Costs for interstate relay call minutes are reimbursed to AT&T by the National Exchange Carrier Association, Incorporated (NECA) in accordance with the Interstate Cost Recovery Plan effective July 26, 1993. More recently, relay calls placed over the internet (IP and VRS relay calls) and terminating in Virginia are also reimbursed to FCC-authorized IP and VRS relay providers through the NECA Interstate TRS Fund.

Complaints

(6) Complaints—(i) Referral of complaint. If a complaint to the Commission alleges a violation of this subpart with respect to intrastate TRS within a state and certification of the program of such state under §64.605 is in effect, the Commission shall refer such complaint to such state expeditiously.

(ii) Intrastate complaints shall be resolved by the state within 180 days after the complaint is first filed with a state entity, regardless of whether it is filed with the state relay administrator, a state PUC, the relay provider, or with any other state entity.

(iii) Jurisdiction of Commission. After referring a complaint to a state entity under paragraph (c)(6)(i) of this section, or if a complaint is filed directly with a state entity, the Commission shall exercise jurisdiction over such complaint only if:

(A) Final action under such state program has not been taken within:

(1) 180 days after the complaint is filed with such state entity; or

(2) A shorter period as prescribed by the regulations of such state; or

(B) The Commission determines that such state program is no longer qualified for certification under §64.605

(iv) The Commission shall resolve within 180 days after the complaint is filed with the Commission any interstate TRS complaint alleging a violation of section 225 of the Act or any complaint involving intrastate relay services in states without a certified program. The Commission shall resolve intrastate complaints over which it exercises jurisdiction under paragraph (c)(6)(iii) of this section within 180 days.

(v) Complaint procedures. Complaints against TRS providers for alleged violations of this subpart may be either informal or formal.

(A) Informal complaints.—(1) Form. An informal complaint may be transmitted to the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau by any reasonable means, such as letter, facsimile transmission, telephone (voice/TRS/TTY), Internet e-mail, or some other method that would best accommodate a complainant's hearing or speech disability.

(2) Content. An informal complaint shall include the name and address of the complainant; the name and address of the TRS provider against whom the complaint is made; a statement of facts supporting the complainant's allegation that the TRS provided it has violated or is violating section 225 of the Act and/or requirements under the Commission's rules; the specific relief or satisfaction sought by the complainant; and the complainant's preferred format or method of response to the complaint by the Commission and the defendant TRS provider (such as letter, facsimile transmission, telephone (voice/TRS/TTY), Internet e-mail, or some other method that would best accommodate the complainant's hearing or speech disability).

(3) Service; designation of agents. The Commission shall promptly forward any complaint meeting the requirements of this subsection to the TRS provider named in the complaint. Such TRS provider shall be called upon to satisfy or answer the complaint within the time specified by the Commission. Every TRS provider shall file with the Commission a statement designating an agent or agents whose principal responsibility will be to receive all complaints, inquiries, orders,

decisions, and notices and other pronouncements forwarded by the Commission. Such designation shall include a name or department designation, business address, telephone number (voice and TTY), facsimile number and, if available, internet e-mail address.

(B) Review and disposition of informal complaints. (1) Where it appears from the TRS provider's answer, or from other communications with the parties, that an informal complaint has been satisfied, the Commission may, in its discretion, consider the matter closed without response to the complainant or defendant. In all other cases, the Commission shall inform the parties of its review and disposition of a complaint filed under this subpart. Where practicable, this information shall be transmitted to the complainant and defendant in the manner requested by the complainant (e.g., letter, facsimile transmission, telephone (voice/TRS/TTY) or Internet e-mail.

(2) A complainant unsatisfied with the defendant's response to the informal complaint and the staff's decision to terminate action on the informal complaint may file a formal complaint with the Commission pursuant to paragraph (c)(6)(v)(C) of this section.

(C) Formal complaints. A formal complaint shall be in writing, addressed to the Federal Communications Commission, Enforcement Bureau, Telecommunications Consumer Division, Washington, DC 20554 and shall contain:

(1) The name and address of the complainant,

(2) The name and address of the defendant against whom the complaint is made,

(3) A complete statement of the facts, including supporting data, where available, showing that such defendant did or omitted to do anything in contravention of this subpart, and

(4) The relief sought.

(D) Amended complaints. An amended complaint setting forth transactions, occurrences or events which have happened since the filing of the original complaint and which relate to the original cause of action may be filed with the Commission.

(E) Number of copies. An original and two copies of all pleadings shall be filed.

(F) Service. (1) Except where a complaint is referred to a state pursuant to §64.604(c)(6)(i), or where a complaint is filed directly with a state entity, the Commission will serve on the named party a copy of any complaint or amended complaint filed with it, together with a notice of the filing of the complaint. Such notice shall call upon the defendant to satisfy or answer the complaint in writing within the time specified in said notice of complaint.

(2) All subsequent pleadings and briefs shall be served by the filing party on all other parties to the proceeding in accordance with the requirements of §1.47 of this chapter. Proof of such service shall also be made in accordance with the requirements of said section.

(G) Answers to complaints and amended complaints. Any party upon whom a copy of a complaint or amended complaint is served under this subpart shall serve an answer within the time

specified by the Commission in its notice of complaint. The answer shall advise the parties and the Commission fully and completely of the nature of the defense and shall respond specifically to all material allegations of the complaint. In cases involving allegations of harm, the answer shall indicate what action has been taken or is proposed to be taken to stop the occurrence of such harm. Collateral or immaterial issues shall be avoided in answers and every effort should be made to narrow the issues. Matters alleged as affirmative defenses shall be separately stated and numbered. Any defendant failing to file and serve an answer within the time and in the manner prescribed may be deemed in default.

(d) Replies to answers or amended answers. Within 10 days after service of an answer or an amended answer, a complainant may file and serve a reply which shall be responsive to matters contained in such answer or amended answer and shall not contain new matter. Failure to reply will not be deemed an admission of any allegation contained in such answer or amended answer.

(e) Defective pleadings. Any pleading filed in a complaint proceeding that is not in substantial conformity with the requirements of the applicable rules in this subpart may be dismissed.

Virginia Relay consumers can provide comments directly to AT&T or through VDDHH in a number of ways.

AT&T receives consumer comments from:

- Communication Assistants (CA)
- Relay Center Support Desk
- Virginia Relay Customer Care Desk 1-866-246-9300 (TTY) 1-866-894-4116 (Voice)
- AT&T National Relay Website www.att.com/relay
- Consumer Correspondence

VDDHH receives comments from:

- VDDHH Toll-Free Customer Service Number - 1-800-552-7917 (TTY/Voice)
- On-line Relay Consumer Input Form - www.vddhh.org
- VDDHH E-mail Address - frontdsk@vddhh.virginia.gov
- Virginia Relay Advisory Council Members
- Regional Consumer Forums
- VDDHH Town Hall Meetings
- Contracted Outreach Staff
- Consumer Correspondence
- The Commonwealth Poll

VDDHH, AT&T, and the VDDHH TRS Administrator work closely together to quickly address and resolve customer issues involving relay service.

Over the past five years, the average turnaround time for resolution of complaints has been 24 hours or less, with the majority of complaints being resolved on the same day they are reported. All complaints directly related to CA performance are routed to the relay center manager, who is required to meet with the individual CA within seventy-two hours of receipt of the complaint. Additional CA training is then scheduled if appropriate. Complaints or inquiries related to technical or billing issues are not subject to a specific deadline since technical research or follow-up with other entities may be necessary. However, timely resolution of these items is still required and monitored by VDDHH. The SCC routinely assists VDDHH with billing issues related to phone companies under their jurisdiction.

If a complaint takes longer than 30 days to resolve and/or appears to address a violation of FCC standards, the VDDHH TRS Administrator handles the complaint. The consumer is contacted for additional information and a dialog with AT&T is established. If the complaint is not resolved within an additional 30 days, VDDHH initiates a formal Complaint to State Vendor Form. The filing of this form involves the State's Contract Manager and the Office of the Attorney General into the resolution process. The form is then forwarded to AT&T with a state-mandated ten-day written response deadline. Once a response is received, contract terms and conditions are reviewed, and, where appropriate, formal action is taken according to the Virginia Public Procurement Act and *Vendor's Manual.*

If for any reason a complaint does not appear to be progressing towards timely resolution within the FCC required 180 day timeframe, VDDHH contacts the consumer and informs them of procedures for filing formal or informal complaints with the FCC. The consumer is also provided information for contacting the Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy for additional assistance with the filing processes outlined in §64.604 K.6.

Virginia Relay Service is in full compliance with FCC requirements regarding consumer complaint processes.

Confidentiality and Portability of TRS Customer Information

(C) Treatment of TRS customer information. Beginning on July 21, 2000, all future contracts between the TRS administrator and the TRS vendor shall provide for the transfer of TRS customer profile data from the outgoing TRS vendor to the incoming TRS vendor. Such data must be disclosed in usable form at least 60 days prior to the provider's last day of service provision. Such data may not be used for any purpose other than to connect the TRS user with the called parties desired by that TRS user. Such information shall not be sold, distributed, shared or revealed in any other way by the relay center or its employees, unless compelled to do so by lawful order.

VDDHH and AT&T use Relay Choice Profiles (RCPs) to store customer information, and RCPs are available to all Virginia Relay users. RCPs can be used to identify in-coming call types, designate preferred toll providers (both regional and long distance), indicate call preferences (inclusion of background noise and spelling correction), and store up to twenty frequently called numbers. RCPs can be set-up by mailing an RCP form to VDDHH or AT&T, on-line at http://www.att.com/relay or http://www.varelay.org. Customers can also create/update their RCP over the phone with VDDHH or the Virginia Relay Customer Care Desk.

Virginia Relay also offers relay users an expanded version of RCP called a Multi-User Relay Choice Profile (MURCP). The new MURCP allows a customer to access his/her profile from any location, not just their home or office number. It also allows multiple relay users in the same household to have their own private profile choices. The customer must request their MURCP be set up through the Virginia Relay Customer Care Desk, through VDDHH, or via the AT&T Relay Website. Once a customer has set up a MURCP, he/she will have a private 4-digit PIN that must be provided to the CA in order to activate the profile for each relay session. For confidentiality