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**Code of Practice for the Provision of Backup Power Supply for
Local Fixed Telephony Service**

Office of the Communications Authority

28 May 2013

Introduction

This Code of Practice is issued under section 6A(1) of the Telecommunications Ordinance¹.

2. The background to the issue of this Code of Practice is given in the Statement of the former Telecommunications Authority (“TA”)² entitled “Backup Power Supply for Local Fixed Telephony Services During Failure of Public Electricity Supply” issued on 19 April 2006. This Code of Practice has been effective since 19 May 2006 and replaces the “Code of Practice for the Provision of Backup Power Supply to Network Equipment of Fixed Telecommunications Network Services” issued by the former TA on 26 September 2003.

3. This Code of Practice should be observed by Fixed Telecommunications Network Services (“FTNS”) licensees, Fixed Carrier (“FC”) licensees, Unified Carrier (“UC”) licensees and Services-Based Operator (“SBO”) licensees who offer Class 1 and/or Class 2 services. For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Code of Practice shall absolve or derogate the licensees from operating in accordance with the terms of their licences and the legislation currently in force in Hong Kong.

4. In this Code of Practice

‘basic telephone line service’ means a type of local fixed telephony services providing a fixed single-line telephone line usable with a telephone set which is powered from the telephone line or a network termination equipment not relying on mains power supply from the customer premises, and which enables the user to use the basic telephone line service without reliance on the mains power supply from the

¹ This Code of Practice was first issued on 19 April 2006 and revised on 28 May 2013.

² Pursuant to the Communications Authority Ordinance (Cap. 616), with effect from 1 April 2012, all duties and powers of the Telecommunications Authority are conferred on the Communications Authority, and all duties and powers of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority are conferred on the Office of the Communications Authority, the executive arm of the Communications Authority.

customer premises;

‘Class 1 service’ and ‘Class 2 service’ have the same meaning as assigned to them in the SBO licence;

‘Licensee’ means any FTNS licensee, FC licensee, UC licensee or SBO licensee who offers Class 1 and/or Class 2 services;

‘local fixed telephony service’ means a real-time voice communications service using the numbers for local fixed telecommunications service allocated by the Communications Authority;

‘network termination equipment’ means any telecommunications equipment supplied by the Licensee and installed on the premises of individual customer for the provision of a network termination point to which customer premises equipment is connected;

‘lifeline device’ means a medical alarm or any other device for an elderly, infirm or invalid to summon assistance in the event of an emergency without having to dial manually the telephone number of the emergency service; and

‘network equipment’ means all equipment operated by the Licensee for the provision of local fixed telephony service.

Provision of Backup Power

5. All network equipment and network termination equipment involved in the provision of basic telephone line service should be supported by backup power supply systems in the manner stated in paragraphs 6 and 7.

6. For network equipment installed at the telephone exchanges and network switching centres, the backup power supply systems should be connected to alternate emergency electricity power such as diesel

generators to ensure continuity of service, including emergency call service, during prolonged outage of the public electricity supply.

7. For network equipment installed in customer buildings, the backup power supply systems should have a capacity of *at least one hour* endurance during outage of public electricity supply to ensure the proper operation of the network equipment as well as the provision of line powering to the network termination equipment (if any) and telephone sets connected with and powered by the network equipment. The backup power supply systems should also be connected, where practicable, to alternate emergency electricity supply such as diesel generators in the buildings.

Physical Constraints, etc.

8. In case the physical environment in customer buildings renders the provision of backup power hazardous or technically not practicable (or for other reasons beyond the control of the Licensee), the Licensee may be exempt from the requirement to provide backup power supply provided that (i) it has duly informed its customers of the power outage problem and limitation in accordance with paragraph 10 and (ii) it reports to the Office of the Communications Authority (“OFCA”) in accordance with the requirement as specified in paragraph 12. The Licensee shall also observe the requirements in paragraph 9 with regard to service to lifeline device users.

Service to Lifeline Device Users

9. Notwithstanding paragraph 8, the Licensee shall ensure that only service fully supported by backup power for both network equipment as well as network termination equipment will be provided to lifeline device users. For SBO licensees who provide service to lifeline devices users, they shall ensure that the FTNS/FC/UC licensee who provides the relevant network connection should provide backup power supply in conformance with paragraphs 5 to 7 of this Code of Practice. For avoidance of doubt, where the lifeline device of the lifeline user is

provided by a third party, the Licensee is only required to make available backup power supply to the relevant telecommunications equipment which include network equipment as well as the network termination equipment supplied or operated by the Licensee. The Licensee is not required to provide backup power to the lifeline devices which are supplied by third parties.

Customers' Awareness

10. For those customer buildings where backup power is not available, and for those services where backup power to network equipment or network termination equipment is not available, in order to alert customers to the fact that the service will be suspended during power failure, the Licensee should take necessary steps to inform the customers. OFCA will regard a customer as being duly informed if

- (a) the customers have, before or upon subscription of service, confirmed that the service will not be used by lifeline user or connected with lifeline devices; and
- (b) the Licensee has affixed a label or sticker to the wall socket panel or any equipment installed on the customers' premises or taken other reasonable steps (such as regular bill inserts in the monthly statements) to alert the customers the power outage problem and limitation and remind the customers that the service is not suitable for connection to lifeline devices.

11. For those customers as of the date of first issue of this Code of Practice (i.e. 19 April 2006), paragraph 10(a) is not applicable and the requirement under paragraph 10(b) shall come into force six months after the date of first issue of this Code of Practice.

Filing of Reports to OFCA

12. Any Licensee not meeting the requirement as specified in paragraph 7 of this Code of Practice, shall provide *half-yearly* reports to

OFCA. The reports should include information concerning the names and locations of the customer buildings that do not have backup power supply, feasibility for making backup power available to these buildings, progress of works being carried out, target dates of completion and confirmation that customers have been duly informed of the power outage problem and limitation.