

TIO Good Industry Practice Guide for Faults

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About this guide

This guide outlines what we think is good industry practice for faults in telecommunications equipment and services.

Good industry practice is different to minimum legal obligations for providers. These are set out in:

- [Telecommunications \(Consumer Complaints Handling\) Industry Standard 2018](#)
- [Telecommunications Act 1997](#)
- [The Australian Consumer Law](#).

We expect consumers to participate with providers in finding ways to resolve their complaints. This includes troubleshooting service faults with providers.

The examples in this guide are not exhaustive. We always consider the individual circumstances of each complaint when deciding on a fair and reasonable resolution.

View our [Fairness Framework](#) to learn more.

Examples of Good Industry Practice for Faults

We recognise good industry practice as providers responding to consumers experiencing faults with telecommunication equipment and services:

- Quickly, effectively and fairly
- With due care and skill
- With transparency.

1. Complaints we handle about faults with equipment and services

1.1 Where consumers buy equipment with services from providers, we can handle complaints about:

- Phones (mobiles and non-mobiles)
- Tablets
- Modems
- Routers.

1.2 Where consumers buy equipment with no services from providers, we usually do not handle complaints about:

- Smart-home and/or Internet-of-Things devices
- Smart watches
- Drones
- Accessories, such as headphones, phone cases and charging devices
- Game consoles
- Laptops.

We assess if the equipment problem affects consumers' ability to use services.¹

If the answer is no, we will likely not handle these complaints. For example, if consumers buy phones from providers and change their minds about the colour and this is the only issue, we will not handle such complaints. This is because the colour of phones does not affect consumers' ability to use phone services.

¹ See Appendix A

1.3 Where consumers buy services from providers, we can handle complaints about:

- Mobile coverage
- Slow internet speeds
- Internet dropouts
- Delays in connecting or fixing services
- Missed technician appointments
- Service outages
- Recurring service faults.

2. Troubleshooting

2.1 Where consumers report faults with equipment and services, we expect providers to:

- Promptly contact consumers by their preferred methods about the faults they report
- Understand consumers are not telecommunications specialists and may need technical issues explained in plain English
- Train staff in a working knowledge of the equipment and services they sell
- Help consumers find and fix faults with equipment and services
- Keep records of troubleshooting steps consumers have taken and their outcomes, so they do not have to repeat them again
- Train staff to look holistically at all problems that may be affecting equipment and services.

2.2 When troubleshooting fails to fix equipment and services, we expect providers to arrange:

- Assessment or replacement of equipment
- Technician visits for services.

2.3 When remote testing shows services are not faulty and consumers are still experiencing faults, we expect providers to:

- Acknowledge consumer experience
- Before sending technicians to site, brief them on:
 - consumers' issues
 - what testing and troubleshooting has been done.

3. Assessing equipment

3.1 Where consumers report faults and troubleshooting does not fix faults with equipment, we expect providers to:

- Contact consumers by their preferred methods about assessing equipment
- Set out clear timeframes for assessing equipment
- Tell consumers about what happens next, whether equipment is faulty or not
- Where possible, loan consumers equipment for the assessment period.

4. Faulty equipment

4.1 Where providers find equipment is faulty, we expect them to:

- Share information with consumers about the fault
- As quickly as possible either:
 - repair, or
 - replace, or
 - refund equipment.

4.2 Where providers send technicians to consumer premises, we expect technicians to:

- Keep appointments
- When technicians are unable to keep appointments, tell consumers as soon as possible
- Make new appointments with consumers as soon as possible
- Do their work with due and care skill
- Check potentially faulty equipment, including network and connection equipment upstream and downstream from reported faulty equipment
- Share technician reports with their network partners where helpful and appropriate
- Share the outcomes of technician reports with consumers.

4.3 Where providers find equipment is not faulty, we expect them to:

- Share with consumers information showing equipment is not faulty
- Explore other ways to investigate and resolve complaints.

4.4 Where providers find equipment is not faulty but think the equipment of other providers may be, we expect them to:

- Help consumers contact other providers, or

- Contact other providers to report faults where consumers have no relationship with other providers.

5. Equipment from third parties

5.1 Where providers sell consumers equipment from third parties, we expect providers to:

- Before consumers agree to contracts, ensure they understand:
 - what they are buying
 - how the equipment suits their purposes
 - the equipment is from third parties
 - how much they will pay each month and over what period
 - how much they will pay in total and over what period
 - who will own the equipment at the end of the period
 - what charges consumers need to pay if they cancel services the equipment is used for
 - who will own the equipment if consumers cancel services or the agreement term ends
- Show us information supporting the above.

6. Internet faults

6.1 Where consumers complain about internet service dropouts and/or slow internet speeds, we expect providers to:

- Follow the steps set out above at **2. Troubleshooting** and **4. Faulty equipment**
- Test the services remotely and/or by asking consumers to run tests on their end
- Share the test results with consumers.

6.2 Where service dropouts and slow internet speeds do not meet agreed standards, we expect providers to:

- Repair services or equipment to meet standards, or
- Refund charges to reflect shortfalls from standards, or
- Offer consumers free release from agreements.

6.3 Where service dropouts and slow internet speeds do not meet agreed standards and providers cannot supply that standard, we expect providers to:

- Reduce ongoing service charges to reflect shortfalls from standards, or
- Offer consumers free release from agreements
- Stop advertising and selling service standards they cannot supply.

7. Mobile coverage

7.1 Where consumers complain about no mobile service or poor-quality mobile service (such as call dropouts, mobile data dropouts or slow mobile data speeds), we expect providers to:

- Show consumers accurate coverage maps (including known black spots and topographical factors that may affect coverage) before they agree to pay for services
- Follow the steps set out above at **2. Troubleshooting** and **4. Faulty equipment**
- Test the services for periods of time that show normal use
- Share the test results with consumers.

7.2 Where poor-quality service does not meet agreed standards, we expect providers to:

- Repair services to meet standards, or
- Refund charges to reflect shortfalls from standards
- Offer consumers free release from agreements.

7.3 Where poor-quality service does not meet agreed standards and providers cannot supply that standard, we expect providers to:

- Reduce ongoing service charges to reflect shortfalls from standards, or
- Offer consumers free release from agreements
- Stop advertising and selling service standards they cannot supply.

References

For more information, please see our:

- [Good Industry Practice Guides](#)
- [Guidance Documents](#)
- [Terms of Reference](#)