

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Division of Communications assists the Commission in carrying out its duties as prescribed by the Code of Virginia. It oversees and monitors the continued implementation of competition in jurisdictional landline telecommunications markets with the goal of achieving an effective regulatory environment that balances the advancement of competition with the protection of consumers. The Division assists the Commission in developing, implementing, and enforcing alternatives to traditional forms of regulation as competition evolves. It monitors, enforces, and makes interpretations on certain rates, tariffs, and operating procedures of investor-owned telecommunications utilities. With a major focus on public health and safety, the Division enforces service standards and investigates and resolves consumer inquiries and complaints. It assures compliance with tariff regulations, maintains territorial maps, coordinates extended area service studies, enforces pay telephone regulations, and performs special studies. The Staff testifies in rate, service, and generic hearings, and meets with the public on communications issues and problems. The Staff also assists in carrying out provisions of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, monitors developments at the federal level, and prepares Commission responses where appropriate.

At the end of 2015, there were subject to the regulatory oversight of the Division:

14	Incumbent Investor-Owned Local Exchange Telephone Companies
153	Competitive Local Exchange Telephone Companies
104	Long Distance Telephone Companies
35	Payphone Service Providers
11	Operator Service Providers for Payphones

SUMMARY OF 2015 ACTIVITIES

Consumer Complaints Investigated:	1,987
Wireline Complaints	1,703
Wireless Complaints	284
Total Consumer Credit Adjustments:	\$595,251
Wireline Credit Adjustments	\$574,332
Wireless Credit Adjustments	\$20,919
Service Quality Oversight:	
Network Access Lines (reported as of June 30, 2015)	2,375,546
Tariff revisions received:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	66
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	68
Interexchange Companies	4
Tariff sheets filed:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	474
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	469
Interexchange Companies	16
Promotional Filings:	
Incumbent Local Exchange Companies	6
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	4
Interexchange Companies	0
Cases in which staff members prepared testimony, reports, or comments	7
Certificates of Convenience and Necessity:	
Competitive Local Exchange Companies	
Granted	6
Amended	8
Canceled	4
Interexchange Companies	
Granted	5
Amended	5
Canceled	3
Interconnection Agreements or Amendments approved or dismissed	11
Payphone registration and rules enforcement provided on:	
Local Exchange Company payphone service providers	5
Local Exchange Company payphones	129
Private payphone service providers	30
Private payphones	1,619
Payphone audits	0
General Network/Infrastructure Field Reviews	17

OTHER:

Assisted Commission counsel with respect to formal rate, service, and generic matters.
 Conducted 911 follow up inspections at Verizon’s central offices and continued monitoring compliance with the SCC’s 911 safety and reliability requirements pursuant to Case No. PUC-2012-00042.
 Represented the Commission during the General Assembly session on matters relating to telecommunications legislation.
 Continued to monitor companies that have elected to offer services on a non-tariffed or de-tariffed basis as allowed by 2011 legislation. To date, 37 companies have notified the Division they will be offering some or all retail services without a tariff. The Division provides website links to the companies’ product guides on its home page.

Responded to questionnaires and inquiries from the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners ("NARUC") and others with respect to telecommunications matters.

Participated in matters affecting communications policy with federal agencies.

Participated in Chapter 5 (Utility Transfers Act) cases with the Division of Utility Accounting and Finance.

Managed Virginia's telephone number utilization program.

Monitored Virginia Universal Service Plan (Lifeline) participation, and participated in a multi-state Universal Service/Eligible Telecommunications Carrier group.

Monitored Verizon Virginia's Performance Assurance Plan.

Monitored and maintained Local Exchange Company bonds, received biannual reporting and monitoring information, and conducted required Gross Domestic Product Price Index calculations.

Represented the Commission at Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments meetings relating to 911 emergency call services matters.

Staff member serves on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Communications.

Continued outreach activities by making presentations to trade and citizen groups, associations, and telephone companies.