

Chapter 3: PROVISION OF 9-1-1 ACCESS-ONLY SERVICE

SUMMARY: This Chapter implements the requirements of 25 M.R.S. § 2935, by establishing requirements associated with the provision of 9-1-1 Access-Only Service, or “Soft Dialtone” service

§1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Chapter, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

- A. **9-1-1 Access-Only Service.** “9-1-1 Access-Only Service” means the provision of 9-1-1 access to a residential telephone customer's premises when telephone service to the premises has been otherwise suspended or disconnected.
- B. **9-1-1 Call.** “9-1-1 Call” means any use of 9-1-1 services initiated by any means or medium, including, but not limited to, voice calls and text messaging.
- C. **9-1-1 Services.** “9-1-1 Services” or “9-1-1” means means the delivery of 9-1-1 Calls to the proper PSAPs with the ALI and ANI of an entity requesting emergency services. 9-1-1 Services or 9-1-1 includes Internet protocol enabled services.
- D. **ALI Database.** “ALI Database” means the set of ALI records residing within a computer or other digital storage system.
- E. **Automatic Location Identification.** “Automatic Location Identification” or “ALI” means a 9-1-1 service capability that enables the automatic display of information defining the geographical location of the telephone used to place a 9-1-1 Call.
- F. **Automatic Number Identification.** “Automatic Number Identification” or “ANI” means a 9-1-1 service capability that enables the automatic display of the 7-digit number used to place a 9-1-1 Call.
- G. **Emergency Services Communication Bureau.** “Emergency Services Communications Bureau” or “Bureau” is the bureau within the Public Utilities Commission which is responsible for the statewide implementation and management of 9-1-1.
- H. **Commission.** “Commission” means the Maine Public Utilities Commission.
- I. **Intercept Process.** “Intercept process” means a process to stop a telephone call directed to a disconnected or suspended telephone number and redirect that call to a recorded announcement.
- J. **Involuntary Disconnection.** “Involuntary Disconnection” means cessation of local exchange service that is not requested by the customer. It includes but is not limited to

disconnection for non-payment. For the purposes of this Chapter, an involuntary disconnection begins when the customer no longer is provided access to the public switched network from the premise, i.e., after any period of involuntary suspension.

- K. **Involuntary Suspension.** “Involuntary Suspension” means the temporary period immediately before a customer is involuntarily disconnected but during which the telephone continues to have access to the public switched network.
- L. **Lifeline-Eligible Customer.** “Lifeline-Eligible Customer” means a customer qualifying for the Lifeline or Linkup services pursuant to Chapter 294 of the Commission’s rules, whether or not the customer receives either of the services.
- M. **Local Exchange Carrier.** “Local Exchange Carrier” or “LEC” is as defined by 35-A M.R.S. § 102(9-E).
- N. **Telephone Exchange Service.** “Telephone Exchange Service” is as defined by 35-A M.R.S. § 102(18-B)
- O. **Public Safety Answering Point.** “Public Safety Answering Point” or “PSAP” means the physical or virtual entity where 9-1-1 Calls are received that is directly dispatching emergency response services or transferring the calls to other public or private safety agencies for dispatch.
- P. **Public Switched Telephone Network.** “Public Switched Telephone Network” or “PSTN” is as defined by 35-A M.R.S. § 102(12-A).
- Q. **Soft Dialtone.** “Soft Dialtone” means access to some PSTN services after telephone service has been otherwise suspended or disconnected at a residential premise. For the purpose of this Chapter, Soft Dialtone provides, at a minimum, 9-1-1 Access-Only Service capability, but may provide additional telecommunication services.
- R. **Soft Dialtone Record.** “Soft Dialtone Record” is the record residing on the ALI Database that corresponds to a location that receives soft dialtone.
- S. **Telephone Utility.** “Telephone Utility” is as defined by 35 M.R.S. § 102(19).
- T. **Voluntary Disconnection.** “Voluntary Disconnection” means cessation of local exchange service made at the request of the customer.
- U. **Voluntary Suspension.** “Voluntary Suspension” means a hiatus of the provision of local exchange service, provided at the customer’s request, when the carrier and the customer have an agreement under which the customer may pay a fee and the carrier resumes service after a period of time.

§2. APPLICABILITY

This rule is applicable to all LECs.

§3. PROVISION OF SOFT DIALTONE

A. Involuntary Disconnections

1. **Duration.** If a residential customer is subject to an Involuntary Disconnection, the LEC must provide Soft Dialtone to the telephone line of the customer for no less than 90 days following the date on which the line was involuntarily disconnected.
2. **Exceptions.** Notwithstanding Section 3(A)(1) of this Chapter, a LEC is not required to provide, or may cease providing, Soft Dialtone caused by an Involuntary Disconnection if any of the following conditions occur:
 - a. the LEC must install additional equipment to provide Soft Dialtone;
 - b. the LEC must expend resources to provide equipment or services that provide Soft Dialtone;
 - c. the LEC is unable technically or operationally to provide Soft Dialtone;
 - d. the customer voluntarily relinquishes Soft Dialtone at the location;
 - e. the LEC determines that the customer location receives active service to the PSTN by some means other than the line that was disconnected, regardless of the technology used to provide the connection; or
 - f. the LEC determines that the customer premises have been vacant for a minimum of 60 days, the line has been or is scheduled to be physically disconnected by an entity other than the LEC, or the line is associated with a structure that has been destroyed.
3. **Software Required.** For the purpose of Section 3(A)(2)(a) and (b) of this Chapter, equipment, resources, and services do not include new or upgraded software necessary to provide Soft Dialtone and do not include equipment, resources, or services associated with non-utility service.
4. **Customers with Inability to Pay.** Upon request, a customer may be treated like an Involuntary Disconnection if the customer:
 - a. provides evidence to the LEC, in writing, that he or she is a Lifeline-Eligible Customer; and
 - b. asserts to the LEC, in writing, that the customer requires a disconnection because of inability to afford telephone service.

- #### B. Voluntary and Involuntary Suspensions.
- If a residential customer is subject to a Voluntary Suspension or Involuntary Suspension, the LEC must provide Soft Dialtone to the telephone line during the period of suspension.

C. **Other Soft Dialtone Provisions**

1. **Additional Telephone Services.** When providing Soft Dialtone pursuant to this Chapter, a LEC may, at its option, provide other telephone services in addition to 9-1-1 Access-Only Service.
2. **Optional Provision of Soft Dialtone.** A LEC may, at its option, provide Soft Dialtone under circumstances different than those required by Sections 3(A) and 3(B) of this Chapter and for a period of time that exceeds the durations required by sections 3(A) and 3(B) of this Chapter.
3. **Soft Dialtone Required when Dialtone is Present.** A LEC must provide Soft Dialtone whenever a telephone provides access to dialtone.

- D. **Customer Notification.** A LEC must provide residential customers with periodic written information regarding the presence of Soft Dialtone. The notice shall be in clear language.

§4. **ALI DATABASE AND OTHER 9-1-1 REQUIREMENTS**

A. **General Provisions**

1. **Database Record Required.** Every location receiving Soft Dialtone must have a corresponding record in the ALI Database until such time as Soft Dialtone is removed.
2. **Database Record Removed.** When telephone service is restored or a new installation is performed in a location that receives Soft Dialtone caused by an Involuntary Disconnection, the Soft Dialtone Record corresponding to that location shall be removed from the ALI Database by the close of the next business day.
3. **Location Dialed.** If a Soft Dialtone number is dialed, the LEC must redirect the call using an Intercept Process.

B. **Record Formats**

1. **Customer Name Field.** The customer name field in a Soft Dialtone Record must be designated as follows:
 - a. **Involuntary Disconnection.** “INVOLUNTARY DISC—NO CALL BACK.”
 - b. **Voluntary or Involuntary Suspension.** Retain customer’s name appended with “NO CALL BACK.”
 - c. **Optional Provision of Soft Dialtone.** “LEFT-IN SERVICE-NO CALL BACK.”

2. **Class of Service.** The class of service field in a Soft Dialtone Record caused by an involuntary disconnection or optional provision of Soft Dialtone must be “NON-PUBLISHED.”
- C. **Annual Audit.** As part of its 9-1-1 annual data validation required by Chapter 2, §6(F)(2) of the Bureau’s rules, each LEC must perform the following review of its Soft Dialtone Records:
1. **Removal of Obsolete Records.** Verify that each location corresponding to a Soft Dialtone Record currently receives Soft Dialtone and remove all Soft Dialtone Records for which Soft Dialtone no longer exists;
 2. **Review of Time Limitations.** Review the length of time each Soft Dialtone Record has resided in the ALI Database and, for each Soft Dialtone Record that has exceeded the time limitations established in this Chapter, disconnect Soft Dialtone and remove the corresponding record from the ALI Database.
 3. **Reporting of Results.** Within 30 days of completing its annual audit, each LEC will provide to the Bureau the number of Soft Dialtone Records caused by Involuntary Disconnections that continue to exist after the annual audit is complete

§5. WAIVER

Upon the request of any person subject to the provisions of this Chapter or upon its own motion, the Commission, the Administrative Director, the Director of Emergency Services Communication, the Director of Consumer Assistance and Safety, or the Presiding Officer assigned to a proceeding related to this Chapter may, for good cause, consider waivers of any of the requirements of this Chapter that are not required by statute. The waiver may not be inconsistent with the purpose of this Chapter, Title 25, or Title 35-A.

BASIS STATEMENT: The factual and policy basis for this Chapter is set forth in the Commission's Order Amending Rule and Statement of Factual and Policy Basis, Docket No. 2025-00322, issued on January 22, 2026. Copies of the Order have been filed with this Chapter at the Office of the Secretary of State. Copies may also be obtained from the Administrative Director, Public Utilities Commission, 18 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0018.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 35-A M.R.S. §§ 104 and 111; 25 M.R.S. § 2935.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This Rule was approved as to form and legality by the Attorney General on January 28, 2026. It was filed with the Secretary of State on January 28, 2026 (filing 2026-025) and became effective on February 2, 2026.