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AIDS HELPLINE: 0800-0123-22 Prevention is the cure

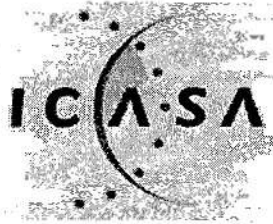
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GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 527 OF 2002



INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

NOTICE WITH RESPECT TO THE INTRODUCTION OF MANDATORY 10-DIGIT DIALING ON THE PUBLIC SWITCHED TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) hereby gives notice to the public that the mandatory 10-digit dialing on the Public Switched Telecommunications Network (PSTN) will only be introduced six months after the promulgation of the Numbering Plan Regulations in terms of Section 89(1) of the Telecommunications Act 103 of 1996, as amended.

Notice of the intention to prescribe a numbering plan in respect of telecommunications services was given in Government Notice 1424 of 2001 in the Government Gazette of 8 June 2001. An invitation to interested persons to submit written comments or representations was included. The written comments received are now being considered after which the Numbering Plan Regulations will be finalized and submitted to the Minister for approval and publication.

The Numbering Plan Regulations will provide for the introduction of mandatory 10-digit dialing on the PSTN. The 10-digit dialing is required to increase number capacity, particularly in the metropolitan areas. Number capacity in Johannesburg within the area code 011 is approaching its limits. The 10-digit dialing will also provide an arrangement where equal number lengths are used for all subscribers.

At the request of Telkom during 2001, the Authority approved the implementation of parallel working for 7-digit and 10-digit dialing procedures as from 6 November 2001, in order to facilitate a migration process. The parallel working was scheduled for a period of six months, which would have lapsed on 8 May 2002 after which mandatory 10-digit dialing would have been necessary.

Requests were received earlier this year from the public, in particular, the South African Intruder Detection Services Association (SAIDSA), to extend the time frame for the implementation of mandatory 10 digit dialing, as they contended that the time given was insufficient. It was argued that there are certain computer-controlled systems, in particular alarm systems, which have to be reprogrammed or even replaced and that this process could not be finalized within the available time. After investigating the matter the Authority decided to extend the parallel working of 7-digit and 10-digit dialing procedures until six months after the promulgation of the Numbering Plan Regulations in the interests of the public and public safety.

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