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Independent Communications Authority of South Africa			
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GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 140 OF 2008

**THE INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
HEREBY PRESCRIBES REGULATIONS ON CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS
AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE TO BE ADHERED TO BY THE
SOUTH AFRICAN POST OFFICE (SAPO) IN TERMS OF CLAUSE 10 OF THE
LICENCE ISSUED TO SAPO IN RENDERING THE RESERVED POSTAL
SERVICES.**

**REGULATIONS SETTING OUT THE MINIMUM CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS
AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE:**

SCHEDULE**1. DEFINITIONS**

In these Regulations any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Postal Services Act (No.124 of 1998) as amended has the meaning so assigned and, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms will have the following meanings:

“Complaint” means a dissatisfaction lodged by a customer in accordance with the licensee's complaints procedure set out in the licensee's customer care standards, expressing the customer's dissatisfaction about the standard of service rendered by the licensee to the extent that the dissatisfaction relates to an issue dealt with in these regulations.

“ICASA Act” means the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act (No. 13 of 2000) as amended.

“Postal Services Act” means the Postal Services Act (No. 124 of 1998) as amended.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REGULATIONS

The purpose of the Regulations is to prescribe the minimum customer care standards to the South African Post Office (SAPO).

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE REGULATIONS

The Regulations prescribe the minimum customer care standards for SAPO.

4. CORE PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO SAPO

4.1 POSTAL SERVICES LICENSEE:

The proposed minimum customer care standards for the Postal Services Licensee to be adhered to at all times are the following:

4.1.1 VISIBILITY

- (a) Corporate signage must be visible and displayed in all the affiliated postal outlets (e.g. retail postal agencies,).
- (b) Corporate signage for Branch Code must be displayed in all postal outlets.
- (c) Business hours must be displayed at all postal outlets.
- (d) All postal outlets have to display collection frequency and clearing times.
- (e) All products and services to be displayed at all postal outlets at all times.
- (f) Copies of Complaints Procedures and dispute resolution mechanisms must be made available to customers when entering into transactions with Service Providers.
- (g) The Complaints Procedures and dispute resolution mechanisms must be displayed at all postal outlets at all times.
- (h) All postal outlets must display the Share Call number, telephone and fax numbers as well as the email address of the contact centres.
- (i) All postal outlets must display their Regional/Provincial contact details e.g. telephone and fax numbers as well as email addresses of contact persons.

4.1.2 ACCESSIBILITY:

- (a) Postal services must be made accessible to People with disabilities.
- (b) Parking bays must be made accessible to People with disabilities.
- (c) Queuing times for customers at all postal outlets may not exceed seven (7) minutes.
- (d) All postal outlets must implement electronic payment systems for the payment of postal services.

4.1.3 LANGUAGE:

All postal outlets may use English and the language that is predominant in a particular area in which the postal outlet is situated.

4.1.4 LOCATION:

Postal Outlets must always be accessible:

- Within a three (3) km radius or
- cover a population density of 1:10 000.

4.1.5 SECURITY:

- (a) All postal outlets must handle mail and other correspondences with utmost integrity and security at all times.
- (b) All postal outlets must ensure the safety of postal users when using postal facilities. Facilities must, where possible, be secured by security guards and warning signals must be made clearly visible at all times.
- (c) All postal outlets must put in place effective measures to guard against mail violation. Security on mail and other postal crimes must be enhanced at all times.
- (d) All postal outlets must display at visible spots a Crime Bust Line at all times.
- (e) All postal outlets must take effective measures to communicate information about available insurance on mail and parcels to their customers at all times.

4.1.6. REPORTS:

- (a) SAPO must submit quarterly reports on the customer complaints they receive to the Authority.
- (b) Reports must be detailed to include, but not limited to:

- (i) Number of complaints received per month,
- (ii) Name and surname of the complainants,
- (iii) Date on which the complaint was received
- (iv) Date on which the complaint was resolved,
- (v) Nature of complaint received,
- (vi) Number of items lost per month,
- (vii) Average turn-around times for all complaints received.
- (viii) Number of applications on waiting list for post boxes.

4.1.7. STAFF ATTITUDE:

SAPO must ensure that it implements effective customer care standard relations management programmes:

- (a) Staff (personnel) at all postal outlets must be helpful, polite and friendly at all times.
- (b) Staff at all postal outlets must have a thorough and accurate knowledge of their products and services.
- (c) Staff at all postal outlets must handle customers with honesty and respect.
- (d) Staff must wear corporate clothing with name tags.

4.1.8. Consumer Confidentiality:

SAPO must protect the confidentiality of consumer information, and in particular, must-

- (a) use the information only for the purpose permitted or required,
- (b) report or release that information only to the consumer or prospective consumer,
- (c) only release that information to another person:

- (i) when directed by the written instruction of the consumer or prospective consumer, or
- (ii) when directed by an order of a court.
- (iii) during the process of collection of debts owed to the licensees to accredited debt collection agencies.
- (iv) by the licensees' auditors for the purpose of auditing their accounts.
- (v) in terms of any applicable law.

4.2 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

4.2.1 General Requirements

- (a) SAPO must publicise a single point of entry for all complaints to be lodged by the complainants.
- (b) SAPO may respond to the complaint in any manner or format which considers appropriate in the circumstances, including, without limitation, in writing, telephonically, by e-mail, via short message services or in person.
- (c) SAPO must acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three (3) days upon receipt of a complaint.
- (d) SAPO must formally resolve all complaints received within 14 days.
- (e) SAPO must maintain a record of all complaints they have received from their end-users and/or customers.

4.2.2 Publishing SAPO's Complaints Procedures

SAPO must, on a regular basis inform their customers about the contents of the Minimum Customer Care Standards.

5. COMPLAINTS ESCALATED TO THE AUTHORITY BY CUSTOMERS

5.1 General Requirements

- (a) Complainants must first give SAPO an opportunity to resolve their complaints before they approach the Authority.
- (b) In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she may approach the Authority for the resolution of the dispute.
- (c) In the event that a dispute is not resolved by the Authority within 21 days, it shall be referred to the Complaints and Compliance Committee in accordance with Section 17 (H) of the ICASA Act No. 13 of 2000 as amended.

6. AMENDMENT AND REPEAL

The Authority may amend or repeal these regulations by notice in the Gazette.

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Advertisements: Tel: (012) 334-4673, 334-4674, 334-4504
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