

Statements regarding ABC story on phone blocking inconsistencies

ACMA Statement 1 – received 20 May 2025

The ACMA was directed by the then Minister for Communications in August 2024 to amend the Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination 2019 (ECS Determination) to include requirements for telcos to identify mobile phones unable to access Triple Zero, notify customers about the limitations with, and not supply carriage services to, such devices.

The risks mentioned in your inquiry were raised during the ACMA's consultation process on implementing a standard that complied with the Minister's direction. Our Impact Analysis identified that some risks could not be addressed within the terms of the direction. Those terms reflected the government's concerns that there was an unacceptable risk that people's lives could be put in danger if they could not access Triple Zero after the shutting down of Australia's 3G networks.

Since the 3G networks were shut down, the ACMA has prioritised the monitoring of and actioning complaints from consumers affected by the 3G shutdown, including where their mobile service has been stopped. We will shortly write to relevant telcos to collect the data outlined in our impact analysis, which will inform our analysis of the impact of these amendments during their first six months in effect.

ACMA Statement 2 – received 21 May 2025

Since the implementation of the amendments to the ECS Determination, the ACMA has been in constant contact with telcos to monitor compliance with these new obligations and respond to and resolve customer issues as they arise. We have also been in discussions with each of the mobile network operators on numerous issues, including articulating our expectations of how they should be supporting their customers and customers of their resellers.

The ACMA is taking an active approach with the Department and the telcos to monitor compliance and assess the impacts of this policy. These actions have provided the ACMA with valuable insights to date. Together with the comprehensive data that we receive from telcos on the impact of the amendments, we will be in a position to provide advice to the Minister for Communications on our view of the effectiveness of the amendments in delivering the Government's policy objective, including whether there are any implementation issues and any regulatory gaps that may require attention.

We are aware that some devices that have been blocked on one telco network are not blocked on other mobile networks. This is because there are differences in the mobile network and handset configurations. This means that some phones are required to be blocked on one network but not the others.

Given that there are thousands of different models of mobile phones in the market that may operate differently, only the telcos can determine whether they will be able to connect to Triple Zero because they have the best knowledge of their own networks and ability to identify whether a device will be able to make emergency calls using 4G/5G.

Decisions to block devices are made by asking manufacturers for evidence of compliance with relevant standards, examining data on their networks over which phones have successfully made Triple Zero calls, and conducting their own testing.

Different network operators and phone manufacturers have made their own decisions about the firmware of the phone and how the phone should operate over their network. Provided that the device can successfully make an emergency call and if necessary, camp-on to the other networks when calling Triple Zero, this would not raise any issues of non-compliance with the ECS Determination.

Consumers who are thinking of buying a new mobile device, or moving providers, should check with the relevant provider to confirm that their device will work on the network.

Government statement – received 21 May 2025

Supporting Australians' access to Triple Zero is critical.

As part of the transition from 3G, providers were required to identify any impacted devices through reliable methodologies and notify the associated users of changes to their service.

The Australian Government's top priority in the 3G switch off has been to protect public safety by ensuring that all mobile phones connected to mobile networks are able to call Triple Zero.

Optus statement – received 21 May 2025

Optus is required by law to prioritise customer safety. As part of the 3G switch off process Optus blocked any phone that we could not guarantee would connect to Triple Zero.

Device manufacturers tailor handsets to suit different markets, which can result in phones with the same model name having different software versions, regional capabilities, or network certifications.

Optus undertook a detailed assessment of device capabilities, as part of its compliance with the ACMA Emergency Calling Service Determination.

We continue to work closely with manufacturers and analyse device usage on our network, to determine whether a handset supports emergency calls over VoLTE.

Devices confirmed as not supporting VoLTE emergency calling were subsequently blocked from the network in line with the regulatory requirements.

Telstra statement – received 21 May 2025

We were required to block some mobile phones from October 2024 under the Federal Emergency Service Call Determination, because they used 3G for Triple Zero calls.

We went through rigorous checks of devices' capabilities, including cross-referencing manufacturer specs, industry data and our own testing.

Regarding this particular device, there were only 25 Xiaomi M11T's using our network nationally.

In some rare cases, devices behave differently depending on the mobile operator's network it's connected to. This means a device may be blocked as incompatible by one operator, but might work on another network.