Submission to the Senate Standing Committee

To the Triple Zero service outage^1 Committee.

Addressing the Triple Zero (000) Problem in Australia – Specifically with relation to mobile phones that may not have the correct software installed.

Terms of Reference

g: any other related matters.

Introduction

This submission is provided to the Senate Standing Committee to address the ongoing challenges and concerns surrounding the Triple Zero (000) emergency service system in Australia.

A problem exists where a Samsung mobile phone of a particular set of models (I don't know the actual models involved) **can not contact he Triple Zero (000) emergency service system if these particular phones have not been upgraded to a specific software level.**

Bakground

My Wife has one of these phones, and she received an SMS Text message saying that, in her understanding, "her phone did not meet certain criterion and so it would be blocked".

Now my history is as an electronics technician and computer programmer, but not in the mobile telephone area, and I read the message and saw that it would only be blocked "if the phone has not been upgraded to at least to a 'certain' level of software" (it stated the specific level).

Her phone was indeed updated to that level already.

Key Issue

- My question is: if the company was NOT able to identify that her phone had been upgraded to the required level remotely, (obviously not - as it sent her the message) will it still block her phone? We don't know!

We are quite stressed about this as there was no contact point in the message, and we certainly can't afford a new phone – this one was given to us by our daughter.

Recommendations

1: That the Mobile Phone companies performing these warnings be forced to conduct themselves properly, and ASK their customers if their phones have been upgraded to the required level of software. They should require an answer. They should not block the phones unless all other options have failed.
2: That the communications infrastructure that maintains the Triple Zero (000) emergency service system in Australia should also be directed to maintain a parallel system (say 001 or similar) with an automated test & answering system at the end of it.

This would allow people (especially with 'suspect' mobile phones) to test their phones out to make sure their phones work on the system.

It would also allow people to reassure themselves that the system is working.

Conclusion

While this system in recommendation 2 would take some money to set up, if it was truly set up in parallel, it would allow the monitoring of the validity of our Triple Zero (000) emergency service system.

Links:
^1:https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/TripleZero48P

Contact Information

For further information or to discuss the points raised in this submission, please contact:

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