

## Vodafone asked to refund value-added service charge

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Thursday ordered leading telecom operator Vodafone-Essar to refund all money that it has charged for providing value-added services (VAS) to its subscribers without seeking their approval.

'The authority had received complaints from the subscribers of Vodafone-Essar Mobile Services Ltd regarding provision of value-added services without consent,' TRAI said in a statement. The firm admitted to 'technical error', it added.

'Based on the explanation furnished by the service provider, it cannot be concluded that the value-added service was provided with the explicit consent of the consumers, particularly when the consumers have denied having given any such explicit consent,' it added.

The regulator has asked the company to refund the money within 15 days.

TRAI also said the money be refunded even to those customers who were denied of their consent while activating value-added services in their account and also to those who were offered the services free of cost initially and charged later.

However, the company said in a statement: 'Vodafone recently received customer queries via TRAI regarding activation of VAS wherein TRAI had enquired whether explicit consent was obtained from the customers.

'For all these cases due proves and explanation have been provided. VAS are activated by Vodafone only after receiving explicit instructions from customers over voices, SMS or IVR (Interactive Voice Record), records of which are maintained as per requirements.'

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