

§6.7

equipment or customer premises equipment shall ensure that the equipment is designed, developed and fabricated so that the telecommunications functions of the equipment are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable.

(2) Whenever the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section are not readily achievable, the manufacturer shall ensure that the equipment is compatible with existing peripheral devices or specialized customer premises equipment commonly used by individuals with disabilities to achieve access, if readily achievable.

(b) *Obligation of Service Providers.* (1) A provider of a telecommunications service shall ensure that the service is accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable.

(2) Whenever the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this section are not readily achievable, the service provider shall ensure that the service is compatible with existing peripheral devices or specialized customer premises equipment commonly used by individuals with disabilities to achieve access, if readily achievable.

(c) *Obligation of Telecommunications Carriers.* Each telecommunications carrier must not install network features, functions, or capabilities that do not comply with the guidelines and standards established pursuant to this part or part 7 of this chapter.

§6.7 Product design, development, and evaluation.

(a) Manufacturers and service providers shall evaluate the accessibility, usability, and compatibility of equipment and services covered by this part and shall incorporate such evaluation throughout product design, development, and fabrication, as early and consistently as possible. Manufacturers and service providers shall identify barriers to accessibility and usability as part of such a product design and development process.

(b) In developing such a process, manufacturers and service providers shall consider the following factors, as the manufacturer deems appropriate:

(1) Where market research is undertaken, including individuals with dis-

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abilities in target populations of such research;

(2) Where product design, testing, pilot demonstrations, and product trials are conducted, including individuals with disabilities in such activities;

(3) Working cooperatively with appropriate disability-related organizations; and

(4) Making reasonable efforts to validate any unproven access solutions through testing with individuals with disabilities or with appropriate disability-related organizations that have established expertise with individuals with disabilities.

§6.9 Information pass through.

Telecommunications equipment and customer premises equipment shall pass through cross-manufacturer, non-proprietary, industry-standard codes, translation protocols, formats or other information necessary to provide telecommunications in an accessible format, if readily achievable. In particular, signal compression technologies shall not remove information needed for access or shall restore it upon decompression.

§6.11 Information, documentation, and training.

(a) Manufacturers and service providers shall ensure access to information and documentation it provides to its customers, if readily achievable. Such information and documentation includes user guides, bills, installation guides for end-user installable devices, and product support communications, regarding both the product in general and the accessibility features of the product. Manufacturers shall take such other readily achievable steps as necessary including:

(1) Providing a description of the accessibility and compatibility features of the product upon request, including, as needed, in alternate formats or alternate modes at no additional charge;

(2) Providing end-user product documentation in alternate formats or alternate modes upon request at no additional charge; and

(3) Ensuring usable customer support and technical support in the call centers and service centers which support their products at no additional charge.