

1960—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 86-751 substituted “common carrier lines of communication, whether derived from wire or radio facilities,” for “wires”.

§ 203. Schedules of charges

(a) Filing; public display

Every common carrier, except connecting carriers, shall, within such reasonable time as the Commission shall designate, file with the Commission and print and keep open for public inspection schedules showing all charges for itself and its connecting carriers for interstate and foreign wire or radio communication between the different points on its own system, and between points on its own system and points on the system of its connecting carriers or points on the system of any other carrier subject to this chapter when a through route has been established, whether such charges are joint or separate, and showing the classifications, practices, and regulations affecting such charges. Such schedules shall contain such other information, and be printed in such form, and be posted and kept open for public inspection in such places, as the Commission may by regulation require, and each such schedule shall give notice of its effective date; and such common carrier shall furnish such schedules to each of its connecting carriers, and such connecting carriers shall keep such schedules open for inspection in such public places as the Commission may require.

(b) Changes in schedule; discretion of Commission to modify requirements

(1) No change shall be made in the charges, classifications, regulations, or practices which have been so filed and published except after one hundred and twenty days notice to the Commission and to the public, which shall be published in such form and contain such information as the Commission may by regulations prescribe.

(2) The Commission may, in its discretion and for good cause shown, modify any requirement made by or under the authority of this section either in particular instances or by general order applicable to special circumstances or conditions except that the Commission may not require the notice period specified in paragraph (1) to be more than one hundred and twenty days.

(c) Overcharges and rebates

No carrier, unless otherwise provided by or under authority of this chapter, shall engage or participate in such communication unless schedules have been filed and published in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and with the regulations made thereunder; and no carrier shall (1) charge, demand, collect, or receive a greater or less or different compensation for such communication, or for any service in connection therewith, between the points named in any such schedule than the charges specified in the schedule then in effect, or (2) refund or remit by any means or device any portion of the charges so specified, or (3) extend to any person any privileges or facilities in such communication, or employ or enforce any classifications, regulations, or practices affecting such charges, except as specified in such schedule.

(d) Rejection or refusal

The Commission may reject and refuse to file any schedule entered for filing which does not provide and give lawful notice of its effective date. Any schedule so rejected by the Commission shall be void and its use shall be unlawful.

(e) Penalty for violations

In case of failure or refusal on the part of any carrier to comply with the provisions of this section or of any regulation or order made by the Commission thereunder, such carrier shall forfeit to the United States the sum of \$6,000 for each such offense, and \$300 for each and every day of the continuance of such offense.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title II, § 203, 48 Stat. 1070; Pub. L. 94-376, § 1, Aug. 4, 1976, 90 Stat. 1080; Pub. L. 101-239, title III, § 3002(b), Dec. 19, 1989, 103 Stat. 2131; Pub. L. 101-396, § 7, Sept. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 850.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (a) and (c), was in the original “this Act”, meaning act June 19, 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064, known as the Communications Act of 1934, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 609 of this title and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

1990—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 101-396 substituted “one hundred and twenty days” for “ninety days” in pars. (1) and (2).

1989—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 101-239 substituted “\$6,000” for “\$500” and “\$300” for “\$25”.

1976—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 94-376 designated existing provisions as par. (1), substituted “after ninety days notice” for “after thirty days’ notice”, and struck out provision that the Commission may, in its discretion and for good cause shown, modify the requirements made by or under authority of this section in particular instances or by a general order applicable to special circumstances or conditions, and added par. (2).

§ 204. Hearings on new charges; suspension pending hearing; refunds; duration of hearing; appeal of order concluding hearing

(a)(1) Whenever there is filed with the Commission any new or revised charge, classification, regulation, or practice, the Commission may either upon complaint or upon its own initiative without complaint, upon reasonable notice, enter upon a hearing concerning the lawfulness thereof; and pending such hearing and the decision thereon the Commission, upon delivering to the carrier or carriers affected thereby a statement in writing of its reasons for such suspension, may suspend the operation of such charge, classification, regulation, or practice, in whole or in part but not for a longer period than five months beyond the time when it would otherwise go into effect; and after full hearing the Commission may make such order with reference thereto as would be proper in a proceeding initiated after such charge, classification, regulation, or practice had become effective. If the proceeding has not been concluded and an order made within the period of the suspension, the proposed new or revised charge, classification, regulation, or practice shall go into effect at the end of such period; but in case of a proposed charge for a new service or a revised

charge, the Commission may by order require the interested carrier or carriers to keep accurate account of all amounts received by reason of such charge for a new service or revised charge, specifying by whom and in whose behalf such amounts are paid, and upon completion of the hearing and decision may by further order require the interested carrier or carriers to refund, with interest, to the persons in whose behalf such amounts were paid, such portion of such charge for a new service or revised charges as by its decision shall be found not justified. At any hearing involving a new or revised charge, or a proposed new or revised charge, the burden of proof to show that the new or revised charge, or proposed charge, is just and reasonable shall be upon the carrier, and the Commission shall give to the hearing and decision of such questions preference over all other questions pending before it and decide the same as speedily as possible.

(2)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Commission shall, with respect to any hearing under this section, issue an order concluding such hearing within 5 months after the date that the charge, classification, regulation, or practice subject to the hearing becomes effective.

(B) The Commission shall, with respect to any such hearing initiated prior to November 3, 1988, issue an order concluding the hearing not later than 12 months after November 3, 1988.

(C) Any order concluding a hearing under this section shall be a final order and may be appealed under section 402(a) of this title.

(3) A local exchange carrier may file with the Commission a new or revised charge, classification, regulation, or practice on a streamlined basis. Any such charge, classification, regulation, or practice shall be deemed lawful and shall be effective 7 days (in the case of a reduction in rates) or 15 days (in the case of an increase in rates) after the date on which it is filed with the Commission unless the Commission takes action under paragraph (1) before the end of that 7-day or 15-day period, as is appropriate.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the Commission may allow part of a charge, classification, regulation, or practice to go into effect, based upon a written showing by the carrier or carriers affected, and an opportunity for written comment thereon by affected persons, that such partial authorization is just, fair, and reasonable. Additionally, or in combination with a partial authorization, the Commission, upon a similar showing, may allow all or part of a charge, classification, regulation, or practice to go into effect on a temporary basis pending further order of the Commission. Authorizations of temporary new or increased charges may include an accounting order of the type provided for in subsection (a).

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title II, §204, 48 Stat. 1071; Pub. L. 94-376, §2, Aug. 4, 1976, 90 Stat. 1080; Pub. L. 100-594, §8(b), Nov. 3, 1988, 102 Stat. 3023; Pub. L. 102-538, title II, §203, Oct. 27, 1992, 106 Stat. 3542; Pub. L. 104-104, title IV, §402(b)(1)(A), Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 129.)

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (a)(2)(A). Pub. L. 104-104, §402(b)(1)(A)(i), (ii), substituted “such hearing within 5 months” for

“such hearing within 12 months” and struck out before period at end “; or within 15 months after such date if the hearing raises questions of fact of such extraordinary complexity that the questions cannot be resolved within 12 months”.

Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 104-104, §402(b)(1)(A)(iii), added par. (3).

1992—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 102-538 substituted “a revised charge” for “an increased charge” after “a proposed charge for a new service or”, “or revised” for “or increased” before “charge, specifying by whom and in whose behalf”, “revised charges” for “increased charges” before “as by its decision shall be found not justified”, “new or revised charge, or a proposed new or revised charge” for “charge increased, or sought to be increased” before “; burden of proof to show”, and “new or revised charge” for “increased charge” before “; or proposed charge, is just and reasonable”.

1988—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 100-594 designated existing provisions as par. (1) and added par. (2).

1976—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 94-376 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), substituted “any new or revised charge” for “any new charge”, “in whole or in part but not for a longer period than five months” for “but not for a longer period than three months”, “after such charge, classification, regulation, or practice had become effective” for “after it had become effective”, “the proposed new or revised charge” for “the proposed change of charge”, “but in case of a proposed charge for a new service or an increased charge” for “but in case of a proposed increased charge”, “by reason of such charge for a new service or increased charge” for “by reason of such increase”, “such portion of such charge for a new service or increased charges” for “such portion of such increased charges”, “burden of proof to show that the increased charge, or proposed charge” for “burden of proof to show that the increased charge, or proposed increased charge”, and struck out “after the organization of the Commission” before “the burden of proof.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 94-376 added subsec. (b).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 104-104, title IV, §402(b)(4), Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 129, provided that: “The amendments made by paragraph (1) of this subsection [amending this section and section 208 of this title] shall apply with respect to any charge, classification, regulation, or practice filed on or after one year after the date of enactment of this Act [Feb. 8, 1996].”

FORBEARANCE AUTHORITY NOT LIMITED

Pub. L. 104-104, title IV, §402(b)(3), Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 129, provided that: “Nothing in this subsection [amending this section and section 208 of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and section 214 of this title] shall be construed to limit the authority of the Commission to waive, modify, or forbear from applying any of the requirements to which reference is made in paragraph (1) [amending this section and section 208 of this title] under any other provision of this Act [see Short Title of 1996 Amendment note set out under section 609 of this title] or other law.”

§ 205. Commission authorized to prescribe just and reasonable charges; penalties for violations

(a) Whenever, after full opportunity for hearing, upon a complaint or under an order for investigation and hearing made by the Commission on its own initiative, the Commission shall be of opinion that any charge, classification, regulation, or practice of any carrier or carriers is or will be in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter, the Commission is authorized and empowered to determine and prescribe what