

Decision No. 85999

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
CORPORATION, et al.,

Complainants,

vs.

PACIFIC TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH
COMPANY and GENERAL TELEPHONE
COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA,

Defendants.

Case No. 9482
(Filed December 7, 1972;
amended April 11, 1973)

Carl Hilliard, Attorney at Law, for Executive Communications Corporation, et al.; and Charles R. Crawford and Robert L. Mohr, for themselves; complainants.

Roger P. Downes, Attorney at Law, for The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company; and A. M. Hart, H. R. Snyder, Jr., and Dennis L. Dechert, by Dennis L. Dechert, Attorney at Law, for General Telephone Company of California; defendants.

O P I N I O N

Complainants are several private (i.e., nonpublic utility) communications companies and their clients.^{1/} The companies, on behalf of their clients, provide and maintain radio communications systems, which incorporate private lines furnished by telephone utilities to transmit voice, data, and/or control signals between segments of the systems.

On September 20, 1973 a prehearing conference was conducted by Examiner Gilman and concluded with the agreement by the parties to continue their informal efforts to resolve the issues raised in the complaint. Hearing was held before the same Examiner on December 5, 1974 at which time certain written stipulations of the parties

^{1/} Three public radiotelephone utilities signed the complaint. However, none of the evidence concerned RTU activities or operations. ✓

were received and approved by the Commission in its Interim Decision in this matter, Decision No. 84005. Thereafter, the complaint against General Telephone Company of California was dismissed (Decision No. 84758) on the ground that the stipulation approved by Decision No. 84005 completely resolved the issues concerning that defendant.

On March 5, 1975 the remaining defendant, The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (Pacific) filed a "Satisfaction and Petition for a Final Order" alleging that all of the issues raised in the complaint against Pacific had been satisfied. On April 14, 1975, complainants filed a pleading opposing Pacific's petition; further hearings were held before Examiner Gilman on June 10 and 11, 1975.

Facts

Complainants' clients are businesses which require radio communications between a fixed location (base station) and one or more mobile stations (mobiles). The base station is typically the user's office and the mobile is usually a vehicle equipped to receive and send radio transmissions to and from the base station. The base station's transmitter and receiver are generally located on a mountain top in order to extend radio coverage over the area where reception is required. The base station is connected to such transmitter and receiver by wire lines provided by Pacific. These lines are called RTO circuits or RTOC's. There are two types of RTO circuits, audio lines and signalling lines. The audio line is used to carry the voice transmissions between the base station and the mobile. The signalling line carries pulse-type signals to control the operation of the base station equipment.

Each RTO circuit has an identification number which is designated on a tag affixed to the connecting block or elsewhere on Pacific's facilities located at the user's premises. That tag also has a special reporting number for trouble calls. In order to obtain

repairs on an RTO circuit, both the identification number and trouble number must be known to the party reporting the trouble to Pacific. Associated audio and signalling circuits have different numbers and are repaired by different repair centers which separately work on the problem without coordinating their activities. These tags can become lost, destroyed or illegible. Furthermore, Pacific has, from time to time, changed the reporting numbers without correcting the tag.

Responsibility for trouble calls on all of Pacific's intra-exchange RTO circuits in Los Angeles and Orange Counties has been recently transferred to Pacific's Union Data Reports Center in Los Angeles (DRC). The DRC is equipped with the RTO circuit records and is staffed with operating personnel familiar with the operations of private lines. It appears that this change has resulted in a satisfactory level of repair service. The inter-exchange RTO circuits, however, are still being repaired through the various serving test centers (STC) located throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area. A trouble call placed to an STC is handled by a "P-1 transmission person" who may not be familiar with RTO circuits. As a result of the unsatisfactory repair service by Pacific's STC's complainants have resorted to calling Pacific's marketing division personnel for assistance, locating the problem on the RTO circuit with their own tests and in some instances fixing the telephone circuit themselves.

Position of Parties

On completion of the hearings complainants sought an order that Pacific:

- "1. Establish a single toll free reporting number for all RTO circuits in the Los Angeles/Orange County area to be answered at its Los Angeles DCR by a Pacific Data Report Center Craftsperson.

- "2. Establish a cross-index by customer name and circuit numbers at the Los Angeles DRC of all RTO circuits located in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.
- "3. Maintain complete diagrams of all RTO circuits located in Los Angeles and Orange Counties at the Los Angeles DRC.
- "4. File monthly reports with the Commission of all RTO circuits located in Los Angeles and Orange Counties which are out of order for more than two hours during any one month stating the times the trouble was reported, the tests performed by Pacific to locate the problem, the names of Pacific's repair personnel involved and the cause of the outage."

It also proposed a provision for comments on the reports and for possible reopening if complainants are dissatisfied with the results.

Pacific proposed that we dispose of this proceeding by concluding and/or ordering that:

- "2. Pacific is rendering adequate service on Radio Telephone Operating Channels.
- "3. Pacific should update and publish to RTOC customers and their agents a current list of trouble reporting numbers by circuit number in order to update their records. Pacific should notify the customers and/or the customer's agent as appropriate, at such time as any of these repair telephone numbers are changed.
- "4. Each of Pacific's repair centers should have all circuit records (including Associated Circuit Records) for those RTOC's for which they have primary responsibility.
- "5. Pacific shall continue to provide one number reporting on intra-exchange RTOC circuits at the Los Angeles Data Reports Center.

- "6. Pacific shall continue to provide twenty-four hour repair service on interexchange RTOC circuits in the Los Angeles area serving test centers (STC's).
- "7. Where certain audio (KR or GR) circuits have associated signalling (KS or GS) circuits, customers will not be referred to more than one telephone number to report troubles.
- "8. All repair centers for RTOC circuits should be TOLL FREE if direct distance dialed."

Discussion

The testimony of the complainants related specific instances where Pacific's repairs and repair responses resulted in additional work or frustration for the communications service company, or the ultimate consumer. Among the instances cited were: Failure to provide trouble reporting numbers to customers, failure to notify customers when trouble reporting numbers were changed, shortage of trained personnel to take calls and dispatch repairpersons, failure to maintain adequate records at repair centers, lack of rotary facilities at repair locations, and significant additional frustrations in "off hours" when many of the problems seem to occur.

Pacific's evidence was that such instances were not indicative of any general inadequacy of repair service on RTOC's. Although conceding that frustrations often arise in repair situations, Pacific claimed that its current RTOC repair procedures provide its customers with a satisfactory and reasonable repair response.

The record shows that Pacific's customers have on occasion experienced some difficulties in reaching RTOC repair. Further, it appears that some of the problems and frustrations complained of have occurred, but most of the testimony concerning incidents was not specific and seldom documented as to the customer, date, or

individuals involved.^{2/} It was difficult to tell whether some of the complaints related to Pacific's present, or its past, repair practice.

Complainants are apparently generally satisfied with their experiences with the Union Data Test Center, but are concerned that they will continue to be dissatisfied with the performance of the individual STC's scattered throughout the Los Angeles area.

Generally speaking the Commission has taken the position that it should set standards for service, leaving the utility to devise the means to provide it. We will follow that approach here.

The record shows that Pacific's maintenance and repair services as provided through DRC are satisfactory. There is sufficient reason to believe that inter-exchange lines, served by STC's, may not be adequately serviced. This is in large part a reflection of the fact that the specialized needs of RTOC circuits are only a small part of the responsibility of STC personnel.

We cannot find that Pacific has taken satisfactory steps to ensure that all STC personnel who may be expected to work on RTOC's have the necessary training. Its proposal for eliminating the prior confusion over which number to call for repair seems reasonable. It also appears that there should be a specific requirement that Pacific have up-to-date records of each RTOC at the appropriate STC. However, complainants' proposal for a single toll-free number is not necessary.

We reject complainants' suggestion that Pacific be required to accept additional liability for damages if it fails to meet certain minimum standards; Finding 1 eliminates the most likely basis for such a requirement.

^{2/} Complainants originally sought a statewide reorganization of Pacific's repair structure; however, there is no evidence of record on difficulties in other than the Los Angeles area. Complainants have failed to meet their burden to prove that there is any justification for statewide relief.

Findings

1. Pacific's overall service to RTOC's in the Los Angeles Basin has improved and is now satisfactory on average.

2. There have been specific incidents of previous negligence in the past; the procedure governing STC's and the orders proposed by Pacific are not adequate to guard against their recurrence.

3. Pacific should be expected to ensure that adequately trained personnel handle RTOC trouble calls at STC's.

4. Complainant communications companies and others similarly situated should be expected to provide significant assistance to Pacific in providing instructors, and training and test materials for RTOC personnel training without charge. They should also cooperate with Pacific in establishing standards for training.

5. A single integrated facility is not the only effective way to provide adequate service for STC's.

6. If an up-to-date list, cross-referenced between customer name, circuit number, and trouble reporting number is provided, complainants will have an adequate timely means of obtaining assistance from Pacific.

7. There is insufficient indication that a single trouble reporting number for all RTOC's would provide a speedier, more reliable trouble reporting system.

8.a. Each STC should have the appropriate test board and complete circuit records for all RTOC's assigned to it.

b. Pacific should continue to provide one number reporting on intra-exchange RTOC circuits at the Los Angeles Data Reports Center.

c. Pacific should continue to provide twenty-four hour repair service on inter-exchange RTOC circuits in the Los Angeles area serving test centers (STC's).

d. Where certain audio (KR or GR) circuits have associated signalling (KS or GS) circuits, customers will not be referred to more than one telephone number to report troubles.

e. All repair centers for RTOC circuits should be toll free if direct distance dialed.

9. Pacific should assign a single individual to provide liaison concerning Los Angeles Basin RTOC service problems, with authority to establish the objectives and check the fulfillment of such objectives for RTOC training programs, ensure the DRC and STC's have all the materials and records needed, and that each paired signal and voice circuit should have the same trouble reporting number, included in the list described in Finding 6.

10. Pacific should supply immediate notice to both the communications company and the client involved wherever the repair number assigned to any RTOC circuit is changed.

Conclusion

Relief should be granted to the extent set forth in the following order.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company (Pacific) shall establish training standards after consultation with all communications companies engaged in the business described above, in the Los Angeles Basin (hereinafter "such customers").

2. Pacific shall establish a training program designed to meet the standards established under Ordering Paragraph 1 for each of its employees now assigned or to be assigned responsibility for RTOC's furnished to such customers.

3. No person shall be assigned to a STC with responsibility for RTOC's furnished to such customers until he or she has demonstrated that his or her training has met such standards.

4. Pacific's responsibilities under Ordering Paragraphs 2 and 3 are subject to the conditions that such customers provide the assistance described in Finding 4.

5. Pacific shall publish and keep current a list to cover the Los Angeles Basin as described in Finding 5 and furnish a copy of such list to such customers.

6. Pacific shall furnish each STC in the Los Angeles Basin with the appropriate test board and complete up-to-date circuit records for all RTOC's assigned to it.

7. Pacific shall designate one of its employees to perform the functions described in Finding 9 and shall notify each such customer of that person's name.

8. Each STC shall have the appropriate test board and complete circuit records for all RTOC's assigned to it.

9. Pacific shall comply with Ordering Paragraphs 5, 6, 7, and 8 within ninety days after the effective date hereof. Pacific shall report progress on compliance with Ordering Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 monthly until Ordering Paragraph 3 is complied with.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 29th
day of JUNE, 1976.

Robert Baxian

President
William J. ...
...
Commissioners

Commissioner D. W. Holmes, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.