

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Mandatory 10-digit dialling begins March 31**

**(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2019 March 25):** Mandatory 10-digit dialling for all local calls will begin on 2019 March 31.

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) had extended the period of permissive dialling by five (5) months to 2019 March 30, after receiving requests for an extension from service providers and some of their large business customers, to address challenges relating to systems employing machine-to-machine communications and PBX telephone systems.

The challenges included budgetary constraints prohibiting the timely replacement of affected equipment and the length of time needed to reconfigure thousands of Point of Sale (POS) and alarm systems. Affected customers include hospitals, hotels, security companies and some major government entities.

However, the major issues have been addressed and mandatory 10-digit dialling will be implemented. This means that as of 2019 March 31, if only the 7-digit telephone number is dialled, the call will not be completed and the caller will instead hear the following message from their telecoms provider:

**“Mandatory ten-digit dialling is now in effect for all local calls. Please hang up and redial using the area code plus the seven-digit number. This is a message from FLOW/Digicel etc.”**

All systems and devices used to dial 10-digit telephone numbers were to be updated (where required) during the ten-month permissive dialling period, which ends on March 30, 2019, to accommodate the dialling change. These include alarms, safety systems, PBXs, fax machines, speed diallers, auto-diallers, calling lists, and out-dialling lists on computers — that are equipped for, or facilitate outward calling.

The OUR wishes to make it clear that mandatory 10-digit dialling is not intended to alter or replace any existing special arrangements or agreements that customers have with their service providers for the handling or treatment of incoming calls.

**BACKGROUND**

On 2018 May 30, a new area code, 658, was implemented in Jamaica to augment the supply of numbers provided under the existing area code 876. This made it necessary to introduce mandatory 10-digit dialling for all local calls.

To facilitate the transition from 7- to 10-digit local dialling, the OUR had established a 5-month period of permissive dialling (ending 2018 October 30) during which both 7 and 10 digits may be dialled to complete calls — with a reminder message (about mandatory dialling) heard prior to call connection whenever a 7-digit number is dialled. The permissive dialling period was extended to 2019 March 30. -30-

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