

<b>Case Reference</b>	R/E/I/103
<b>Title</b>	Service Difficulty – SingTel’s DEL Service Incident (“ <b>Service Difficulty Incident</b> ”)
<b>Case Opened</b>	23 November 2012
<b>Case Closed</b>	26 June 2013
<b>Complainant</b>	IDA initiated this proceeding pursuant to the Code of Practice for Telecommunication Service Resiliency (“ <b>Code</b> ”)
<b>Respondent</b>	Singapore Telecommunications Ltd (“ <b>SingTel</b> ”)
<b>Case Summary</b>	<p>On 23 November 2012, a Service Difficulty Incident occurred in SingTel’s fixed line network, which caused some SingTel end users to experience disruptions to their fixed line telephone (DEL) services and data circuits. Around 4,000 subscriber lines were affected. The Service Difficulty Incident lasted for a total duration of 2 hours and 37 minutes.</p> <p>At approximately 4.37pm on 23 November 2012, SingTel detected alarms affecting five cabinets in the Ang Mo Kio area. Maintenance staff were dispatched to the area to carry investigation and restoration work.</p> <p>It was found that the alarms were triggered by a faulty optical card in the Synchronous Digital Hierarchy (“<b>SDH</b>”) equipment in one of the cabinets. The fault was rectified by replacing the faulty optical card. Full restoration of the services was completed at approximately 7.14pm.</p> <p>IDA’s investigation revealed that, while there was a hardware fault in the optical card of the SDH equipment which resulted in the Service Difficulty Incident, there was also a fibre break in the standby fibre path of the SDH ring network which resulted in service disruption.</p> <p>Under normal circumstances, a fault in the optical card of the SDH equipment would not result in service disruption as the standby optical card would be activated and would use the standby path of the SDH ring network.</p> <p>IDA’s investigation further revealed that the fibre break was due to an operational error in the fibre patching work, and SingTel not following the Standard Operation Procedure (“<b>SOP</b>”), when SingTel was carrying out some migration work prior to the Service Difficulty Incident. As a result, the fibre break was not attended to in a timely manner and resulted in service disruption when the optical cards failed.</p>

**IDA's Determination**

SingTel would be in breach of the Code for any service difficulty incident that exceeds one hour and affects an aggregate of 500 or more local fixed line telephone subscriber lines. It would not be a breach of the Code if SingTel can establish to the satisfaction of IDA that the occurrence of the Service Difficulty Incident was not within its control and occasioned through no fault on its part.

In this case, IDA had noted SingTel's explanation that the cause of the faulty optical card of the SDH equipment was not something that was within SingTel's control. After reviewing the facts, IDA did not find SingTel at fault for the failure of the faulty optical card of the SDH equipment.

However, IDA found that the occurrence of the Service Difficulty Incident was within SingTel's control, and for which fault can be attributed to SingTel. IDA found that the Service Difficulty Incident would not have occurred if: (a) SingTel had carried out the fibre patching work correctly, and (b) SingTel had followed its SOP to check that all alarms had been cleared after the fibre patching work was completed.

In view of the above, IDA found that the Service Difficulty Incident could have been avoided and that SingTel had not established to IDA's satisfaction that the occurrence of the Service Difficulty Incident was not within SingTel's control and occasioned through no fault on its part. IDA therefore determined that SingTel was in breach of the Code.

In determining the appropriate amount of financial penalty to be imposed on SingTel, IDA took into account all relevant factors, including the cause and nature of the Service Difficulty Incident, the duration of the Service Difficulty Incident, and relevant mitigating factors.

Taking into consideration all of the above, IDA imposed a financial penalty of S\$50,000 on SingTel.