

## RADIO-INTERFERENCE COMPLAINTS

### Investigation Procedure

1. **General.** This Instruction describes the procedure to be followed by investigation officers in dealing with complaints of interference with sound radio and television broadcast reception. Office procedure is dealt with in A 3010.
2. **Object and extent of investigation.** The object is to give satisfaction to the complainant, provided that it can be done within the scope of investigation defined in A 2001. If satisfaction cannot be given, the T.M. (E/Radio) should write to the complainant explaining the reason.
3. **General attitude and approach in dealing with complaints.** Interference suppression work calls for the application of sound technical knowledge and common sense. The attitude of an investigation officer to the public should be one which creates confidence in the officer and respect for the P.O.; this will be achieved by a straightforward courteous manner and practical efficiency.
4. *Pass cards and visiting cards* should be carried by all investigation officers. Pass cards should be shown on request; visiting cards should be used with discretion.
5. **Method of investigation.** For normal interference complaints the procedure should be as follows:
  - (a) The complainant should be visited within a week of the receipt of his complaint, to
    - (i) confirm that the complaint is justified (see F 1001)
    - (ii) make sure that the receiving installation is not unduly susceptible to interference (see pars. 7 - 9)
    - (iii) acquire information likely to be of use in tracing the interference to its source.
  - (b) If the investigation officer is satisfied that the complaint is justified and that suppression at the source is necessary, he should attempt to find the source as quickly as possible. Time should not be wasted in prolonged listening tests at complainants' premises - *the time can be used more profitably in making local inquiries and in testing likely sources of interference.* Interference rarely occurs during a visit but, if it does, the investigation officer should lose no time in trying to find the source, using the portable interference-tracing set (see F 1121).
  - (c) When the source has been found, the permission of the plant owner should be sought for tests to ascertain the best method of eliminating the interference (see F 1091 and C 4007).
  - (d) On completion of tests, the plant owner should be approached with the request to take such action as the tests have shown to be necessary.

6. *Special procedure* should be adopted in the following circumstances:-

(a) If P.O. plant is involved (see F 3006).

(b) If the source is equipment made by firms who have special arrangements for interference suppression (see F 5010).

(c) If the complaint relates to a receiver used on betting premises (see par. 19).

Information on the procedure to be followed when dealing with particular sources of interference is included in Instructions in the series C 2000 - C 4999.

7. **Complainants' responsibilities.** Complainants are under an obligation to take reasonable precautions to minimize interference before an owner of plant causing interference is put to the expense of applying remedial measures. They may be asked to have receiving installation faults corrected - if the faults are considered to have a bearing on the complaint - and to make reasonable alterations if their installation appears to be unduly susceptible to interference (see pars. 8 and 9).

8. **Unsatisfactory receiving installations.** A receiving installation should be regarded as unduly susceptible to interference if it uses

(a) a mains aerial

(b) an aerial closely coupled to electric lighting or power wiring, or any other form of close-coupling with the source.

9. **Reasonableness of requests for alterations.** Investigation officers should use their discretion wisely in deciding what alterations they ask a complainant to make. It is, for instance, unreasonable to insist on the erection of an outdoor aerial if there is a tenancy restriction on the use of such installations; it is unreasonable to press for improvements to a receiving installation if the cost greatly exceeds that of suppression at the source. On the other hand, the investigation officer should be firm in asking for alterations to be made if they are clearly required, especially if the complainant's is the only installation affected by interference. In appropriate cases the superiority of an outdoor aerial should be demonstrated by erecting a temporary one.

10. Progress in a case should not be held up for alterations to be made to an unduly susceptible installation if satisfactory installations are also affected by the same source of interference.

11. **Suppression at complainants' premises** should not be resorted to unless attempts to suppress at the source have had to be abandoned owing to

(a) inability to find the source

(b) suppression at the source being technically or economically impracticable

(c) the plant owner refusing to have suppressors fitted, or

(d) both the plant owner and the complainant refusing to pay for suppression at the source.

Interference suppression at complainants' premises is dealt with in B 1020.

**12. Card A 878 should be left at a complainant's address if**

(a) a complainant is not at home when called on (no other visit should be made until a reply is received)

(b) a complainant is asked to say when recommended alterations or repairs to his receiving installation have been completed (see pars. 7 - 10)

(c) a case has reached an inconclusive stage and a complainant is asked to say whether reception is satisfactory or not after a further trial.

Card A 878 is also used as a certificate of a satisfactory conclusion to a case (see par. 20).

**13. Investigation officers should always leave it to the complainant to insert on card A 878 the date and time for any further visit that may be required, but the number of days required for notice should be written in the space provided on the A 878 before the card is left with the complainant. Assistance should be asked for if more than one appointment is received for the same time.**

**14. Suspended investigations.** When a case is held up awaiting the return of card A 878, reply to a letter, or for stores etc., the case papers should be sent to the Asst. Exec. Engr. (see A 3010).

**15. Ineffective visits** are a costly waste of time and transport. Visits should be made by appointment whenever possible. A wasted visit, made without appointment to a complainant whose telephone number has been given on Form A 3230, is inexcusable. Long journeys should never be made without an appointment, even though the appointment has to be made by letter.

**16. Unlicensed receiving installations.** Investigation officers should not ask to inspect receiving licences, but if it comes to their notice that unlicensed apparatus is being used they should tell the Head Postmaster without delay. Except as explained in par. 17, no complaint should be investigated that concerns only an unlicensed receiving installation. Unlicensed transmitting installations should be dealt with as explained in General, D 0031.

**17. Receivers supplied on approval by dealers.** As an act of grace the P.O. permits dealers to use their own licences for periods not exceeding 14 days to cover the installation of receivers on trial at customers' homes.

**18. Prospective buyers of receivers** sometimes refuse to get a licence when the 14-day trial period ends unless interference is abated. In these circumstances the investigation officer should explain to complainants that the law requires them to have a licence to install or work their receiver whether reception is good or not, and if they fail to get one they are liable to prosecution. If they persist in their refusal to buy a licence, interference investigations started solely on their behalf should be stopped and the facts should be reported to the Head Postmaster.

**\*19. Receivers on betting premises.** Licensed betting offices, legalized under the Betting and Gaming Act 1960, are authorized to receive only private sound transmissions (including any form of line transmission) giving odds before a race, a commentary on the race and results. Reception of any other sound broadcast or private or public television broadcast is prohibited. Fuller information is given in Tp.S.I. B4.V10.

If interference complaints are received concerning such prohibited broadcasts, a visit should be made in the normal manner. If conditions suggest that the Act is being contravened, the investigation should be discontinued and a full report submitted to the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (TRRD/TU) via the R.D.

If investigation of a complaint from a member of the public discloses that interference is being caused by a domestic broadcast or television receiver situated in a betting office, the investigation should be discontinued and a full report submitted to the Ministry (TRRD/TU) via the R.D. Attempts to adjust the offending receiver or to proffer remedial advice must not be undertaken since this might be construed as condoning the illegal use of the receiver.

The precise location of the receiver should be indicated in all reports.

**20. Closure of cases.** Interference cases should be closed as soon as one of the following conditions is met:-

(a) When an investigation has been finished to the satisfaction of the complainant, and card A 878 has been signed to that effect and is attached to the case papers

(b) When a complainant cannot be given satisfaction and a letter explaining the reason has been sent to him

(c) When a complaint concerns reception of programs which are outside the scope of investigation defined in A 2001, and standard letter A 2569 has been sent to the complainant

(d) When a complainant fails to return card A 878 or reply to a special letter within one calendar month.

Although there should be no delay in closing cases, it is emphasized that no cases should be closed unless it falls into one of the categories given above.

References:- A 2001, A 3010, B 1020, C 4007, F 1001, F 1091, F 1121, F 3006, F 5010  
(NP8.1) General, D 0031  
Tp.S.I. B4.V10

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