

**ARTICLE**

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**REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS  
FOR OPERATING AS AN IPTV  
OPERATOR**

Internet Protocol Television (hereinafter referred to as “IPTV”) is a new method of delivering and viewing television programmes using an IP network and high speed broadband technology. Today many Cable Operators (hereinafter referred to as “Operators”) are opting towards IPTV technology on account of its advantages over traditional Cable Network such as quality signals, time shift TV, non-proliferation of signals, compatible with more majority of display dives & can run over existing internet network and hence, cost effective.

Earlier, on account of absence of any laws/regulations governing IPTV, there was an uncertainty over the subject and therefore, the Operators were hesitant to adopt the said technology. However, post the notification of The Telecommunication (Broadcasting & Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017 (hereinafter referred to as “**TRAI Regulations, 2017**”) read with The Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection (Addressable Systems) (Amendment) Regulations, 2019 (hereinafter referred to as “**TRAI Regulations, 2019**”), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has laid down the regulatory framework governing IPTV.

The brief requirements for commencing business as an IPTV Operator is as follows:-

**NO REQUIREMENTS OF SEPARATE  
LICENSE:-**

IPTV Operators are not required to obtain any separate license from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and can operate their business after obtaining DAS License. It is to be noted that in the event an Operator is only having a DAS License, the said License will enable the Operator to transmit its signals to the Internet Service Provider (hereinafter referred to as “ISP”) which ISP can thereafter, redistribute the said signals to the subscribers. Many IPTV Operators are entering into understandings with different categories of ISPs to serve their subscribers.

**LEGAL OBLIGATION ON  
BROADCASTER TO PROVIDE  
SIGNALS**

In order to get IPTV decoder boxes from the Broadcaster, the IPTV Operator is required to make a request in writing to the Broadcaster for the provision of their content to the said IPTV Operator. Once an IPTV Operator makes a request in writing to the Broadcaster, the said Broadcaster will be bound to execute an Interconnection Agreement with the said IPTV Operator within 30 days from the date of written request & further shall be obliged to provide its content to IPTV Operator within 30 days of the execution of Interconnection Agreement. Therefore, the Broadcasters have a

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legal obligation to provide their signals to the IPTV Operators within 60 days from the date of receipt of first written request.

In the event, Broadcaster fails to provide its signals to the IPTV Operator within the above said time frame, the IPTV Operator can approach Hon'ble Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal, New Delhi for the purpose of enforcement of its legal right to get the content from the Broadcaster.

**CONTENT RECORDING FACILITY & INTEROPERABILITY**

The IPTV Operators are required to maintain necessary facility for continuous monitoring of the IPTV network at their own cost and maintain the recording of the programmes and advertisements carried on the network for a period of 90 days from the date of Broadcast. Further, IPTV service provider should provide commercial interoperability.

**SYSTEM COMPLIANCE WITH TRAI REGULATIONS**

A large number of IPTV distributors are opting for Digital Rights Management (hereinafter referred to as "DRM") Technology owing to its benefits & infact, this fact has also been recognized by TRAI. DRM is recognized as a substitute and better option than Conditional Access System (hereinafter referred to as "CAS").

As far as system requirements of DRM are concerned, the TRAI in TRAI Regulations, 2019 has stated

that the system requirements for DRM shall be dealt with in a separate consultation paper. However, until date, Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (hereinafter referred to as "BECIL") has conducted audit of DRM system deployed by many IPTV Operators wherein BECIL checks the conformity of the DRM system with Schedule-III of the TRAI Regulations, 2017. Further, in those reports, BECIL has recognized that the DRM system deployed by IPTV Operators instead of CAS has the same functionality and serves the same purpose as CAS does for content protection and addressability.

**DISCLAIMER:-**

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