

NPCI/CTS/2021-22/Circular no. 001

April 23, 2021

To,

All Members participating in various NPCI Products

Madam / Dear Sir,

Sub: Adherence to NPCI guidelines by members/participants

NPCI, an umbrella organization for retail payments system, has the responsibility to oversee the adherence to various guidelines of NPCI by the members/participants for all NPCI Products. It is also in the interest of the eco-system that the members/participants observe the rules and regulations set by NPCI through Procedural Guidelines (PG) and Operating Circulars (OC) to ensure that the eco-system runs on the same standards and principles of integrity and credibility.

With the continuous evolution and increased pace of development of payment landscape in the country including the participants leveraging the technological developments, and also the requirement to ensure safe, secure and efficient payment systems, it is incumbent on all participants to ensure strict adherence of the various NPCI guidelines.

NPCI shall ensure that the members/participants are adhering to PGs and OCs of all products of NPCI. Though such activity are presently monitored/tracked at our end and raised to participant concerned when issues are observed, there is no formal process of recording members/participants self-attestation confirming adherence to all NPCI guidelines and take corrective measures/actions for cases where continuous non-adherence is observed. Also, it becomes quite difficult to track the status and progress of non-compliance. The impact due to non-adherence by one participant that affects another participant or the customer need hardly be emphasized here. To address this gap, we are implementing the process of obtaining a self-attestation from members that they are complying with the NPCI guidelines. We attach herewith the **Annexure A** which covers responsibilities of members/participants and **Annexure B** which covers NPCI guidelines to be adhered as on date and will include any guidelines issued from time to time. We shall be obtaining a self-certification from each member/participants that they are adhering to



such guidelines. A communication detailing the modalities of such certification shall be shared separately. NPCI shall also be tracking from various reports, data, etc. to review that members/participants are adhering to the guidelines.

We have also set up Surveillance & Enforcement (S&E) Division within the Risk Management Department of NPCI to handle cases where non-compliance is observed so that proper remedial action can be taken. This will further maintain the smooth functioning of payment systems.

Please make a note of the contents herein and disseminate the information contained herein to the officials concerned.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

Praveena Rai
Chief Operating Officer

Encl:

1. Annexure A - Responsibilities of Members/Participants
2. Annexure B - List of Compliance Documents Checklist

Annexure A

Responsibilities of Members / Participants

The responsibilities of the members/participants to various NPCI products are as follows:

- To comply with the on boarding & certification process.
- Adherence to the rules, regulations, instructions, etc. as per -
 - OCs issued by NPCI
 - PGs of NPCI
 - NPCI data specifications for sending/processing transactions
- Prepare master list of compliances applicable to various products in co-ordination with NPCI & ensure periodic review of the list.
- To monitor the adherence of regulations within the organization and take corrective steps in case of any deviation.

The following corrective steps shall be taken for any non-adherence to NPCI regulations.

Level 1

- Letter shall be issued to the members/participants against any deviation observed.

Letter may be issued based on the severity of the non-compliance advising the members/participants to explain why action cannot be taken on such members/participants for the non-compliance.

- Members/Participants shall provide response within 15 working days from the date of letter.
- If the response is acceptable, then the observation shall be closed at NPCI end.

Level 2

- If the response is not received within 15 working days or the response is not acceptable, then
 - Letter shall be issued addressed to the senior official of the members/participants.

- Members/participants shall be given one to three months' time from the date of issuance of such letter to take remedial action based on the severity.
- If not remedied within the said time lines, the members/participants will be served with a notice for taking action by way of penalty.
- The penalty shall be imposed basis the severity of non-compliance (i.e. low/medium/high).

Level 3

- After imposing the penalty, if it is observed that the member/participant has not taken corrective steps or still not responded to NPCI letter, then the issue shall be escalated, as the case may be, to:-
 - Top management of the member/participants
 - Regulator (RBI)
- The member/participant shall be put under temporary suspension post the above activities with appropriate internal approval. The period of temporary suspension shall be based on the severity of the non-compliant event.
- The non-compliant member/participant shall be provided with suitable time to remedy the non-compliant event and it shall be monitored for closure. Post completion of initial temporary suspension period, confirmation shall be sought from the members/participants for the corrective steps taken at their end.
- In case member/participant has remedied the non-compliant event, the suspension shall be revoked after validating remedial measure taken by such member/participant.
- In case the member/participant has not remedied the non-compliant event, the suspension will be continued till such time it is not remedied.
- After considering the following factors, the case shall be taken up for permanent termination of membership for the product.
 - severity of the case
 - number of times the temporary suspension has been extended
 - failure to implement remedial measures during the suspension period
- In case the remedial measures are implemented by the member/participants, then the termination shall be put on hold and status of non-compliance shall be monitored. If status found to be compliant, then the case shall be closed.

Process for penal action

The penalty shall depend upon the severity of the non-compliance. The S&E Division shall assess each non-compliance by members/participants and classify the severity of such case as low/medium/high. NPCI shall inform the member/participants the severity level for any one or more events of non-adherence to the NPCI guidelines. Based on the severity, the penalty shall be determined. In case proper explanation (acceptable to NPCI) is provided by the member/participant within the 30 days from the date of communication of imposing penalty, in such case, the penalty shall not be applicable. Any decision by NPCI, in this connection, shall be final and binding of such member/participant.

List of Compliance Documents Checklist

Document No.	Sec.	Page No.	Title	Date of Issue
OC No. 06	NA	NA	CTS Half yearly DR drills	06.11.2020
OC No. 38	NA	NA	Active-Active DEM Setup	23-01-2020
OC No. 002	NA	NA	MS patch to deployed in CHI / DEM	17.08.2020
CBCH PG V3.1	1.6	9	Grid based operation process flow	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	1.6	9	Settlement and reconciliation in Grid	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	1.6.1	9	Settlement and reconciliation in Grid	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	1.9	12	Audit	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	1.8.1	12	Guidelines on security features in cheques –CTS 2010	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	2.3	15	Handling of Government cheques.	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.3	20	Crossing	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.5	21	Reject repair and balancing	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.12	23	Validation in capture	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.13	23	Master table synchronization	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.14	24	Image quality checking	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.15	25	Handling IQA failure	Nov-19

CBCH PG V3.1	3.15	25	Handling IQA failure	Nov-19
Document No.	Sec.	Page No.	Title	Date of Issue
CBCH PG V3.1	3.18	26	Service Bureau	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.21	27	Storage of physical instruments	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	4.7.1	36	Monitoring of files	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	4.1	37	Use of PKI	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	7.7	49	Centralised Positive Pay System	Nov-19
CBCH PG V3.1	3.2	27	Post return clearing	Nov-19
NA	NA	NA	Information security audit	NA
NA	NA	NA	Data protection	NA