

**Press Information Bureau
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Ministry of Women and Child Development**

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‘Panic Button and Global Positioning System in Mobile Phone Handsets Rules 2016’ notified

WCD Minister, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi congratulates Prime Minister on the historic step for safety of women

The Department of Telecommunications has notified the “Panic Button and Global Positioning System in Mobile Phone Handsets Rules 2016”. The Ministry of Women and Child Development had taken up the issue of installation of a physical panic button on mobile phones as one of the initiatives in June 2014. It was observed that in order to provide safety to women in distress situation, it is important to enable them to send out distress signal to a family member or the police authorities so that they can be rescued.

The Ministry had discussed this issue with a number of stakeholders as well as Department of Telecommunications and had insisted that a physical panic button is much superior to having an App on the mobile phone. It was argued that a woman in distress does not have more than a second or two to send out a distress message as a perpetrator will often reach out to her mobile phone in the event of a physical/sexual assault. After an elaborate process of discussion and deliberation, the Department of Telecommunications as well as stakeholders finally agreed to have this facility installed in the mobile phones.

Accordingly, the Department of Telecommunications has notified the rules on panic button vide notification dated 22nd April, 2016 issued under section 10 of the Indian Wireless Telegraph Act 1933. Under these rules, w.e.f. 1.1.2017, all feature phones will have the facility of panic button configured to the numeric key 5 or 9 and all smart phones will have the panic button configured to three times short pressing of the on-off button. Further, w.e.f. 1.1.2018, all mobile phones will be required to have the facility of identifying the location through satellite based GPS.

The Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, congratulated the Prime Minister on this historic step which aims at providing a security net to millions of women who face distress situation in day to day life. She stated that India will be one of the first countries to have mandated this for making women feel safe. She also stated that a panic button will also act as a deterrent to perpetrators. She has thanked the Minister for Communication and IT as well as mobile phone handset manufacturers for agreeing to bring about this historic change on her request.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development will now be working with the Department of Telecommunications and the stakeholders to ensure that similar solutions be made available for existing mobile phone handsets in the form of software patches by which same buttons could be configured to send out emergency calls for concerned telephone numbers. Ministry stated that these software patches will be made available for direct download in the smart phones and installation at the mobile phone shops by the concerned manufacturers/service providers.

