

## Casual Calling Rates



spotlight

No one likes to be billed at a "casual calling" rate for long-distance telephone calls – where costs can be more than \$2.00 per minute! If you are contracted with fixed billing rates, be alert! When your contract expires the telephone company may bill your calls at the higher, casual rates. Phone companies usually assess the casual calling rate to "non-subscribers"– those who are not on the company's billing system. Calls billed under this rate are usually at a company's highest rate.

### Causes of Casual Calling Rates

The following circumstances could result in a customer's long-distance calls being billed at casual calling rates:

- You forget to select a long-distance company when you move, order an additional telephone line, or remove a temporary block.
- You make long-distance calls during a period when you are "between" companies. For that period of time, long-distance calls may be billed at "casual" rates.
- You use a telephone line to connect to an Internet Service Provider (ISP), and your ISP changes the dial-in number to a long-distance number without your knowledge, or you fail to check and make sure the new number will not result in long-distance calls to your ISP.
- You use a 10-10 dial-around service without proper enrollment or registration.  
*Note:* This type of service allows you to choose a specific long distance carrier for a call.
- You place an international call, which is not included in your long-distance calling plan.
- You use a directory assistance speed-dial service that automatically places a long-distance call for you – not knowing which company will handle the call, or at what rate.

### How To Avoid Casual Calling Rates

- When moving, contact your local *and* long-distance telephone companies to set up your accounts and calling plans for your new residence or business. If you have a new line installed in an existing home or business, make sure the long-distance service is with the company you prefer and the rates correspond to your calling plan.
- When returning to full service after long-distance service has been blocked for nonpayment, contact your local *and* long-distance companies to make sure you are returned to your preferred long-distance company and calling plan.
- If you switch long-distance companies or calling plans, contact the new company within 7-10 days and verify that the change is in effect for all phone lines in your home or business.
- Always verify the need for pre-registering before using a 10-10 dial-around service to place a long-distance call.
- Before placing an international call, check with your long-distance company to make sure your calling plan covers such calls.
- Avoid using a directory assistance service that offers to speed-dial the long-distance number for you.