

Know Your Telephone Services and Costs



spotlight

Do you regularly review your monthly telephone bill and its itemized charges? The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) recommends that all consumers check their billing statements as a matter of routine.

Telephone bills have become more complex and may include unfamiliar, inappropriate, or incorrect charges. Therefore, it is wise for consumers to become familiar with the

A monthly bill from your local telephone company will always include charges for basic local exchange service. Other charges may include:

- Costs for optional services, such as a second telephone line;
- Long distance charges from other companies;
- Voice messaging services;
- Inside-the-home wire maintenance contracts (an optional service); and
- Custom calling features (caller ID, call waiting, call forwarding and others). The titles for these services can vary from company to company.

It is a good idea to review your bill each month to ensure that charges appear only for the services you have ordered. If a charge does not appear to be correct, call your local telephone company as soon as possible and request an explanation. Upon request, the company *must* provide a complimentary copy of the rate schedule applicable to your usage. Note, however, that the MPSC does not regulate the rates and charges for optional services and the charges may change without notice.

The following charges may appear on your monthly local and long distance bills. These charges are permitted but not required under state or federal laws.

Federal Subscriber Line Charge— covers a portion of the cost to operate and maintain the local telephone network.

Universal Service Fund or School/Library Internet Charge— provides assistance to rural and low-income telephone customers. It also helps supply technology to libraries and public schools. This charge varies by telephone company.

Other Fixed Charges— These additional fees may appear on your phone bill:

- 911
- E911
- Municipal Utilities Charge or Tax, which may be authorized by your local community

911 Surcharges— covers the cost of operating the local emergency phone system. It's required on all customers' bills.

State and Federal Taxes

For questions regarding the above charges, call your local or long distance telephone company.