

## **Purpose**

This pamphlet sums up the rights and responsibilities of customers and your local telephone company in regard to basic residential telecommunications service.

Those are reflected in the billing standards adopted by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) in Case No. U-11043 on June 18, 1996. This brochure provides only a summary of those standards. In all such matters, the full standards adopted by the MPSC will apply and serve as the controlling language.

## **Applicability**

The rules described in this brochure apply only to basic residential telecommunications service. Residential service is furnished primarily for personal or domestic purposes at the customer's home.

## **Availability of Residential Services**

Your local telephone company will provide service to everyone, regardless of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, height, weight, conviction record, or handicap.

However, the company is not required to provide service to a household under any name if an outstanding bill exists at the address and the person responsible for that bill still lives at the address. People applying for service will be required to provide identification that can be readily and inexpensively verified.

## **Free Access to Rates, Charges, and Rules**

The company will give its customers access to its rates and service charges for basic residential telecommunications services. It also will give them access to the MPSC's billing standards. Each customer who asks for these documents will get one free copy of these rates, charges, and standards.

## **Deposits and Prepayments**

No deposit will be required to get basic local service, unless the potential applicant refuses to provide identification that can be readily and inexpensively verified or if that person has a history of payment default for telecommunications service within the past five years.

If a deposit is required, it will not be more than \$150 per line. Before providing service, the company may require a prepayment. The prepayment may equal the charges for basic local service for one billing period.

## **Billing and Payment Standards**

Each customer will get a bill for each billing cycle and the bill will arrive on or about the same day of each billing cycle. The due date will be on the bill. A bill will be considered delinquent if it has not been paid for more than a day past the due date on the bill.

Unless the customer provides other instructions, any partial payment that the company gets for a bill will be credited first against the amount due for basic local exchange service and regulated toll service.

## **Bill Information**

The bill will contain all the information necessary for a customer to determine the accuracy of the bill, including: the billing period, the due date, the telephone number for the bill, any previous balance, the total amount due for basic local service and regulated toll service, an itemized statement of all taxes due, and the total amount due.

The bill will have the telephone number and address of the company where the customer may call and ask questions about the bill or ask for an investigation or make an informal complaint.

## **New Services and Changes in Service**

When a customer orders a new service or makes a change in existing services that results in a billing change, the company will send the customer a written itemized statement of the services ordered, including all associated charges.

A customer shall have the right, within one billing period of receiving a bill for new services or changed services, to cancel, reduce, or change a service without further service charge.

## **Informal and Formal Complaints**

The company will handle informal customer complaints about basic local service in a timely and efficient manner and to the satisfaction of both the customer and the company.

If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the customer may file a formal complaint with the Michigan Public Service Commission. (That complaint would be filed under Section 203 of the Michigan Telecommunications Act and Part 7 of the MPSC's Billing Standards for Basic Residential Telecommunication Service.)

The complaint must contain all the information, testimony, exhibits or other documents and information that a customer intends to use to support the complaint. If a formal complaint is filed with the MPSC, the company may require the customer to pay the part of the bill that is not in dispute.

## **Service Shutoffs**

Basic local service and regulated toll service can be shut off for:

- (1) nonpayment of a delinquent account for basic local service;
- (2) nonpayment of a delinquent account with a balance of \$150 or more for basic local service and regulated toll service;
- (3) a delinquent balance of \$125 or more for three consecutive months for basic local

- (4) service and regulated toll service;
- (4) unauthorized tampering or interference with company facilities and equipment that are on the customer's property;
- (5) refusal to grant access at reasonable times for inspection, maintenance, or replacement of equipment installed on customer's property;
- (6) misrepresentation of the customer's identity;
- (7) violation of a company tariff that hurts the safety of the customer or other persons or the integrity of the Company's system;
- (8) any other unauthorized use or interference with basic local service.

The company will notify the customer in writing of a proposed shutoff at least five days before it is scheduled to take place.

## **Shutoff Extension for Medical or Psychiatric Emergency**

In case of a medical or psychiatric emergency, the company may postpone the shutoff for up to 15 days. To qualify, a customer must provide a physician's certificate identifying the illness and stating there was an emergency. The postponement may be extended for an additional 15 days if the customer provides another physician's certificate.

## **Restoration of Service**

After a shutoff, before it restores service, the company may require the customer to pay all past due charges for basic local service and regulated toll service, a reconnect charge, and a deposit of up to \$150 for each line.

## **Information for the Visually Impaired**

The information contained in this pamphlet is available at no cost, in audio format, to customers who have visual impairments.

## Further Information and Help

If you have any questions about your rights and responsibilities or the rights and responsibilities of your local telephone company, please feel free to contact the company. You may also contact the Michigan Public Service Commission at:

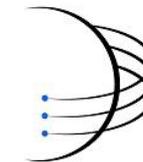
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# You and Your Local Telephone Company: A Summary of Rights and Responsibilities for Basic Residential Telecommunications Service

(As of July 18, 1996)



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ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN  
[www.telecommich.org](http://www.telecommich.org)