



Local, Local Toll and Long Distance Calling

When it comes to residential voice services offered by traditional telephone companies, the range of options and service offerings can be confusing. Here is a guide to some common terms used to describe these services. While this provides an overview of residential voice services offered by traditional telephone companies, cable companies, cell phone companies, and other providers also offer similar voice services.

Issues related to cable, cellular, and other similar services are addressed in other Consumer Guides. More detailed information on issues concerning traditional telephone company residential voice services is provided in other Consumer Guides.

Types of Telephone Company Residential Voice Service

Local Exchange Service is calling within your local exchange. An exchange is a specified area usually encompassing a city, town, or village and its environs. Almost all local exchange calling takes place within a single state, although there are a few multistate local exchange areas. (Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City Missouri is an example of a multi-state local exchange area.)

Local Toll Service (also known as IntraLATA toll, local long distance or regional toll service) is calling within a geographic area known as a Local Access and Transport Area (LATA). Local toll calls include calls outside your local exchange area, but within your area code, as well as calls to different area codes within your LATA. Per-minute toll charges often apply to these calls, unless they are included in a local/long distance service bundle. Most local toll calls take place within a single state, although there are some instances in which these calls cross state lines. (IntraLATA toll calling in the New York City metropolitan area, which includes parts of northern New Jersey and Southern Connecticut is an example of this.)

Expanded or Extended Local Exchange Service extends a local exchange calling area and eliminates local toll charges within in the expanded calling area. However, you may see expanded or extended local exchange service as a surcharge on your telephone bill.

Service Bundles are service packages that include both local exchange and toll calling for a single charge. Sometimes these services include a specified number of calling minutes which can be used for local exchange and toll calling, or they may offer unlimited local and toll calling. These packages often include local toll calling as well as interstate long distance (InterLATA) toll service described below.

Regulation: The services described above usually involve calls within a state (except for interstate toll calling that may be included in service bundles) and are usually regulated by your state public service commission. If you have a problem regarding these services, you can find contact information for your state's commission at www.naruc.org/about-naruc/regulatory-commissions/. You may also contact your state consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, or state attorney general's office to learn about protections and remedies available to you as a consumer. You can also find contact information for these organizations in the blue pages or government section of your local telephone directory or on the internet.

Long Distance Toll (interLATA) Service includes all calls outside the local exchange and local toll service areas or LATAs. This includes calls that originate in one LATA and terminate in another, and international calls. Long-distance toll calls can be between two LATAs in the same state, such as a call from San Diego to San Francisco, or between LATAs in different states. Long-distance toll service includes international service (except in Hawaii where international service is separate from long distance service). When purchasing long-distance toll service, remember to ask whether international calls are included in monthly long-distance calling plans. Toll calling within a single state is subject to state regulation, even if the call crosses LATA boundaries. Interstate toll calling is subject to FCC regulation.

Equal Access requirements that previously allowed certain customers to select separate local exchange and toll carriers have largely been eliminated for interstate toll calling given the increased competitive alternatives available, the cost these requirements imposed on traditional telephone companies, and the very small number of consumers who chose separate interstate toll carriers. Wireline telephone companies still must provide equal access and dialing parity for local toll calls unless the state has removed this requirement. Wireless telephone companies were never subject to equal access requirements. If wireless companies allow use of "dial-around" 1010XXX access codes described below, they may charge a fee.

Dial Around Services allow subscribers to place calls using other telephone companies by dialing a 1010XXX access code. A 1010XXX access code represents the carrier access code (CAC) format. Three-digit carrier identification codes (CICs) were expanded to four digits by adding an initial zero (0) so that "XXX" becomes "0XXX.". The CAC format for carriers who hold a three-digit CIC is the same seven-digit format: "101-XXXX." Because the four-digit CIC of carriers that hold a three-digit CIC will start with a zero, some of those carriers may choose to advertise the seven-digit CAC as "10-10-XXX" because they believe it will be easier for their customers to remember that format. There is no difference between "101-XXXX" and "10-10-XXX."

Subscribers can change their authorized telephone company or companies at any time, but may be charged for doing so.

Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Alternate formats

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