



# Consumer Guide

## Regulation of Cable TV Rates

Most rates charged by cable television companies are not regulated by the FCC. Cable television service is regulated by state-approved local franchising authorities, usually city, county or other governmental organizations. Your LFA may regulate the rate your provider can charge for "basic" cable service, though there is no FCC requirement for such regulation.

### Basic tier services and rates

Cable systems generally are required to offer a "basic tier" of programming to all subscribers before they purchase any additional programming. The basic service tier must include most local broadcast stations, as well as public, educational and government channels required by the franchise agreement between the LFA and your cable company.

LFAs may review any increases in basic service tier rates to verify that they accurately reflect increases in the cable company's programming or other costs that cable operators are allowed to pass through to customers.

### Rates for premium services

Rates are not regulated by LFAs for any tier of service beyond basic service. Your cable company determines the rates charged for these services, including pay-per-channel programming, such as premium movie channels, and pay-per-program services, such as pay-per-view sports events.

Your cable company may not require you to purchase any additional service tier other than the basic service tier in order to have access to pay-per-view events or premium channels offered on an "a la carte" or individual basis. Cable companies are not required to – nor prohibited from – offering channels or programs on an "a la carte" basis.

### Additional FCC rules and guidelines for cable service providers

Your LFA can enforce FCC rules and guidelines in the following areas:

- **Customer service**, including complaints about bills, as well as a cable operator's response to inquiries about signal quality or service requests
- **Franchise fees** paid to the LFA by a cable company for access to public rights of way to offer cable service

### Who to contact with complaints and questions

Contact your cable provider or your LFA regarding customer service, basic service tier rates or franchise fees. The name of your LFA is printed on your cable bill and in your local telephone book.

Contact your cable company about rates for tiers of service other than the basic service tier and for any pay-per-channel programming and pay-per-program services. These rates are not subject to regulation.



Your local and state consumer protection organizations may provide information about your rights as a cable subscriber.

### **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**

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number above, or send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov).

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