

## Understanding Your Phone Bill

Phone bills contain a lot of information and may be difficult to figure out. No matter what type of phone service you have, always remember:

- You have the right to understand your phone bill.
- Review your bill every month and if there is something on it that you do not understand or didn't ask for, call your phone company right away and ask for an explanation.



Before you call, read this brochure. It might have the answers you need.



### California Public Utilities Commission

#### Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages (TEAM) Program

[www.cpuc.ca.gov/team-and-changes](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/team-and-changes)

[cabteamandchanges@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:cabteamandchanges@cpuc.ca.gov)

If you are not able to resolve your dispute with your service provider, call the Consumer Affairs Branch (800) 649-7570

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## What's on your phone bill:

- **Summary information:** Last month's bill amount and payment, the amount currently owed, and when payment is due.
- **Company information:** How you can contact the phone company if you have questions.
- **CPUC and FCC information:** How to contact these agencies if you need help settling a dispute.
- **Plans and services:** This describes phone services and their costs.
- **Payment stub:** Send this stub with your check if you are mailing your payment
- **Charges from other companies:** If another company bills you for long distance calls or other services, their charges, and how to reach that company, will appear in a separate section.

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## Extra Charges

Your bill will show extra charges, such as:

- **Setup charges:** These are one time charges for starting or changing service.
- **Fees, taxes and surcharges:** All phone companies collect these charges. They are required by governments.
- **411 charges:** Phone companies usually charge fees for getting phone numbers from directory assistance - 411.
- **Calling-card charges:** These are charges for calls and billed by using the calling card the phone company issued you. The calls may cost more than directly dialing the call from your own phone.
- **Extra minute charges:** If you have measured service, the bill will show any charges for going over your allowance.

## Pick Useful Services

Phone companies often make offers, such as:

Packages:

- Some companies sell services such as phone, cable, and Internet as a package. It may be a good deal if you want all the services. If not, you may save more by buying fewer services at the regular price.

Basic Service options:

- **Landline** phone companies generally offer:
  - a) An unlimited number of free calls in a local area for one monthly rate.
  - b) A limited amount of free, local calls for a low price and you are billed extra if you go over the limit. This service saves money if you don't make many calls each month.
- **Wireless** companies may offer service that you pay for in advance and when your minutes are used up, you buy more.



## Paying your bill

Pay your bill several days before it is due to avoid late fees or disconnection. If you cannot pay the bill by the due date you should call your phone company and ask if you can pay at a later date or make a partial payment in order to keep your service working.

## Disputes

If you are disputing charges, let the company know as soon as possible. Keep records of when you called, who you spoke to and what was said. If the company will not adjust your bill, you may file a complaint with the California Public Utilities Commission. See the back of this brochure for contact details.