

Items to look for on your phone bill

1 Basic Service

Is the basic monthly charge for dial-tone service

2 Optional Services

Are charges for added services such as call waiting, caller ID, voice mail, 3-way calling, etc.

3 Long Distance

Are charges from your selected carrier, Some long distance companies may add “carrier” or “minimum usage” charges. Contact your long distance provider for an explanation.

4 State and Federal Surcharges

The number and types of surcharges and taxes that appear on telephone bills, and the names of these fees, vary from state to state.

Subscriber Line Charge (SLC) is a charge created and regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that allows local phone companies to recover a portion of the costs associated with interstate access to the local phone network. May appear as “FCC Charge for Network Access” or “Federal Line Cost Charge”

State Subscriber Line Charge is mandated by some state public service or utility commissions to compensate the local phone company for the portion of the cost of providing local telephone lines determined to be associated with state services, such as intrastate long distance services and local exchange services.

Universal Service Fund Surcharge (USF) The Universal Service Fund is a federal government program that helps bring affordable basic phone service to all Americans. The program also assists schools, libraries and rural health care providers in obtaining phone service. Some long distance companies add a USF charge onto their bills to cover their support requirements for this program.

Local Number Portability Charge The FCC requires that local phone companies make telephone numbers portable from carrier to carrier, allowing customers who switch their local carrier to maintain the same phone number. While such service may not be available in all areas, the FCC has allowed companies to apply the charge in order for them to recover their investment in the necessary equipment upgrades to make local number portability technically possible.

5 Taxes

Several taxes are collected through phone bills on behalf of the government. Taxes that typically appear on a local phone bill include:

State & Local/Municipal Tax is a charge levied by state, local or municipal governments on goods and services. It may also be labeled “gross receipts” tax in some states.

911 The 911 charge is levied by local governments to help pay for emergency services such as fire and rescue. In many areas the service includes the ability to get a street address for callers through the phone lines.

Telecommunications Relay Service Charge

This surcharge funds the relay center which transmits and translates calls for hearing and speech-impaired persons.

Lifeline Surcharge is a fee assessed by federal regulators on local telephone customers to assist low-income telephone customers. Some state regulators also assess a fee for this purpose.