

***Federal rules require that pay phones provide access to all available carriers. If your preferred carrier's access code is not working, the pay phone may be in violation of federal rules. Call (202) 418-7534 to report violations.***



**Emergency 911** calls from pay phones are required to be connected at no charge.

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**South Dakota  
Public Utilities  
Commission**

State Capitol Building  
500 East Capitol  
Pierre SD 57501  
Call: 1-800-332-1782  
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# Pay Phone Tips



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## Deregulated Service

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A few years ago substantial changes were made concerning regulation of pay phones. Pay phone owners are allowed by the Federal government to set their own rates for their services and directory assistance calls.

Pay phones and public phones in hotels, hospitals, airports, restaurants, gas stations and other public areas may be serviced by operator service providers that charge high rates and fees. When using a pay phone, it helps to keep a few tips in mind.



### **Check local rate posted on the phone.**

Rates may vary from one phone to another and call length may be limited. Before making a local call, look closely at the information about local calls posted on or near the pay phone.

### **Dial an access code for your carrier.**

Pay phones are usually preset to a carrier. To route the call to your carrier, determine in advance how to contact your carrier from a pay phone. You may have to dial an access code.

### **Verify rates of other services if you are charging the call.**

When using coins, you will know how much you are paying when you are asked to put an amount into the machine. If you are using a calling card or credit card, or a collect call, ask for rate information before making the call.

### **Toll free numbers are not completely free from pay phones.**

Federal rules require the owner of the toll free number to compensate the pay phone operator for the call. Some calling card companies will pass that cost to you in the form of a surcharge

on to the caller when using a pay phone. A typical surcharge would be approximately 35 cents per call.

### **Calling cards do not guarantee lower rates.**

Pay phones can accept calling cards as payment; however the rates charged to your calling card may be the rates of the carrier preset for the pay phone.

### **Calling from motel or hospital rooms may be difficult.**

You may have difficulty accessing your preferred carrier from motel or hospital rooms. Contact the manager and ask how to make this type of call from your room. Many motels will add a surcharge to your motel bill for each call made from your room.

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