



Choosing Telephone Service

- 1. Consider the options you need.** Companies offer a wide variety of services such as call waiting, voice mail, Caller ID and three-way calling. You may want to decide which services you need before talking to companies.
- 2. Do you want one company to provide both local and long distance service?** Some companies offer attractive package deals.
- 3. Think about the calls you make.** Determine your calling pattern. How many calls do you make? How long do you usually talk? Are your calls mostly instate, out-of-state, or international calls? Do you need any special services?
- 4. Look for Extended Area Service.** If you make frequent calls to nearby towns, a company may have a plan which has a wider range of local calling.
- 5. Do you want to sign a long term contract?** If not, you may choose a company which does not require contracts.
- 6. Be wary of rate comparison.** Make sure that the company offering great rates is not comparing their lowest rate to a competitor's highest rate.

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Telephone Tips



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Telephone Tips

- 1. Read your monthly billings carefully.** Watch for charges which are unfamiliar to you. Are you being billed for services you didn't request? Are you getting monthly service charges for companies you've not authorized? Has your service been switched without your knowledge?
- 2. Having an unlisted or unpublished number does not keep telemarketers from calling you.** If you have given your number when subscribing to magazines, signed up for drawings, registered products, your number may have been sold to telemarketing companies. Also, some telemarketers dial randomly. To avoid telemarketing calls request that your number be placed on a "DO NOT CALL" list by writing to: Telephone Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 9014, Farmingdale NY 11735-9014.
- 3. A "PIC" freeze may be obtained from your local telephone company which freezes your choice of long distance carriers until confirmation is received from you to change your telecommunications carrier.** Call your local telephone company to request this service.
- 4. Local telephone companies offer a 900 # block option.** If you do not use 900 #s to get information or entertainment features, you may wish to have the services blocked so no one else can access these services through your phone number at your expense. **You may also wish to obtain an international call block.**
- 5. Beware of area codes 809, 011, 758, or 664.** These are international area codes. Frequently consumers have been left messages on pagers or answering machines about sick or injured relatives from someone you don't know or a number you don't recognize. Some ads request applicants to be mystery shoppers or offer employment information. If you receive a suspicious message, dial "0" and ask the operator the location of the area code before returning the call.



More Tips

- 6. Beware of "free" psychic hotline services.** Ads which offer free services of a psychic may not disclose that only the psychic service is free. The telephone call may be expensive and frequently a monthly service charge is added to your telephone bill.
- 7. Be careful when signing up for contest prizes.** Read what you are signing. The form may contain fine print which authorizes a change in telecommunication services.
- 8. Watch out for misleading company names.** Some companies are actually named "I don't know," "I don't care," "The Telephone Company," "Basic Long Distance." Frequently company names are chosen because they are misleading when a local company ask you to pick a long distance provider.
- 9. Beware of instant calling cards.** A person may respond to an ad and be offered a calling card which may be used to immediately access information or entertainment. Frequently, minor children establish this type of an account which is billed to the phone number where the call originates. Little verification is done to ensure that the person establishing the card has the authority to do so.