

UTILI-FACTS

Paying your telephone bill

Pay your telephone bill by the due date. Your due date must be no earlier than 16 days from the date of the bill or the post-

mark on the envelope. The payment is considered late if received after the due date. If you do not receive a bill, call your telephone provider immediately.

What your bill must show:

- Telephone number(s) or account number(s)
- Billing period or billing end date
- Amount due
- Payment due date
- Charges for local service
- Charges for non-local service such as optional services like voice mail or call waiting, UNLESS these services are part of a bundled-service

package. A description of the services included in bundled-service packages must be provided either in the description or as a foot note

- Service description, service provider's name, and charges for any services not provided by parties other than the customer's local telephone provider (each charge must be on a separate line, for example long distance calls, DSL, or video)
- Applicable taxes, fees, and surcharges, with the specific amount associated with each charge showing
- Identification of those charges that must be paid to keep basic local telecommunications service along with a statement that failure to pay those services will result in disconnection for non-payment
- Explanation of non-obvious abbreviations, symbols, or acronyms that are used to identify specific charges

- Carrier and provider identification for services that are provided by someone other than a customer's local telephone company

What if I can't pay the entire bill?

You should make payment arrangements before your bill is due. Call your phone provider to see if they offer either a deferred payment plan or late payment arrangements and if you are eligible for either option. If you do qualify, make sure that you keep up with the terms of the repayment plan. If you don't, you risk having your service disconnected. Be aware that most companies will require you to pay your regular bill in addition to the arranged deferred amount.

What if I have been overcharged?

- Pay the undisputed portion of your bill or pay the entire bill under protest
- Ask the utility to investigate the disputed amount. The Public Utility Commission requires that the utility report its findings to you within 21 days.
- Be specific in providing information about your concern, such as an already paid past-due balance.
- If you think the investigation finding is incorrect, you may file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission.
- Overcharges must be refunded within three billing cycles or interest must be paid to the customer.
- If you were undercharged, you may be back-billed for no more than six months, unless the utility can produce documentation that justifies the additional billing. If back-bills are greater than \$50, you may ask for a deferred payment plan. If you do not pay these charges, your service may be disconnected.

More importantly, read your bill so that you understand all of the charges. If you don't understand something, contact your phone provider or call the Public Utility Commission.



QUESTIONS:

Call: 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

Write: PUC - Consumer Protection Division
P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326

Online: <http://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx>

