

UTILI-FACTS

Telephone Cramming

Cramming is the practice of adding unauthorized charges for any products or services to your phone bill without your verified consent. It is illegal in Texas. You are not required to pay for unauthorized charges.



Telephone Companies (Local & Long Distance)

Your telephone company may be providing billing services for another company.

If you believe you were crammed, contact your telephone company immediately. Within 45 days of receiving your notice of unauthorized charges on your bill, your telephone company must:

- Notify the other company to cease charging you for the unauthorized product or service.
- Remove any unauthorized

charge from your bill.

- Refund or credit all money to you that you have paid for any unauthorized charges.
- On your request, provide you with all billing records related to any unauthorized charge within 15 business days after the charge is removed from your telephone bill.

What to Watch For:

- Charges for products or services from companies unfamiliar to you.
- Charges for regulatory fees from companies that are not providing service to you.

A Service Provider Must:

- Inform you about products and services and their associated charges.
- Get your consent and a record of verification for any charge that will appear on your phone bill.
- Tell you how to contact the company toll-free.

If You Have Been Crammed:

- Notify your telephone company immediately.
- Request that the unauthorized charges be removed from your account.
- Do not pay the unauthorized charges, but pay the rest of your phone bill on time. Your phone service cannot be disconnected for non-payment of any unauthorized charges.
- Ask for a refund if you have already paid for unauthorized charges.
- An unfavorable credit report cannot be filed against you or any customer who has not paid charges that they allege were unauthorized, unless the dispute regarding the unauthorized charges is ultimately resolved against the customer.
- File a complaint with the PUC .

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>

