

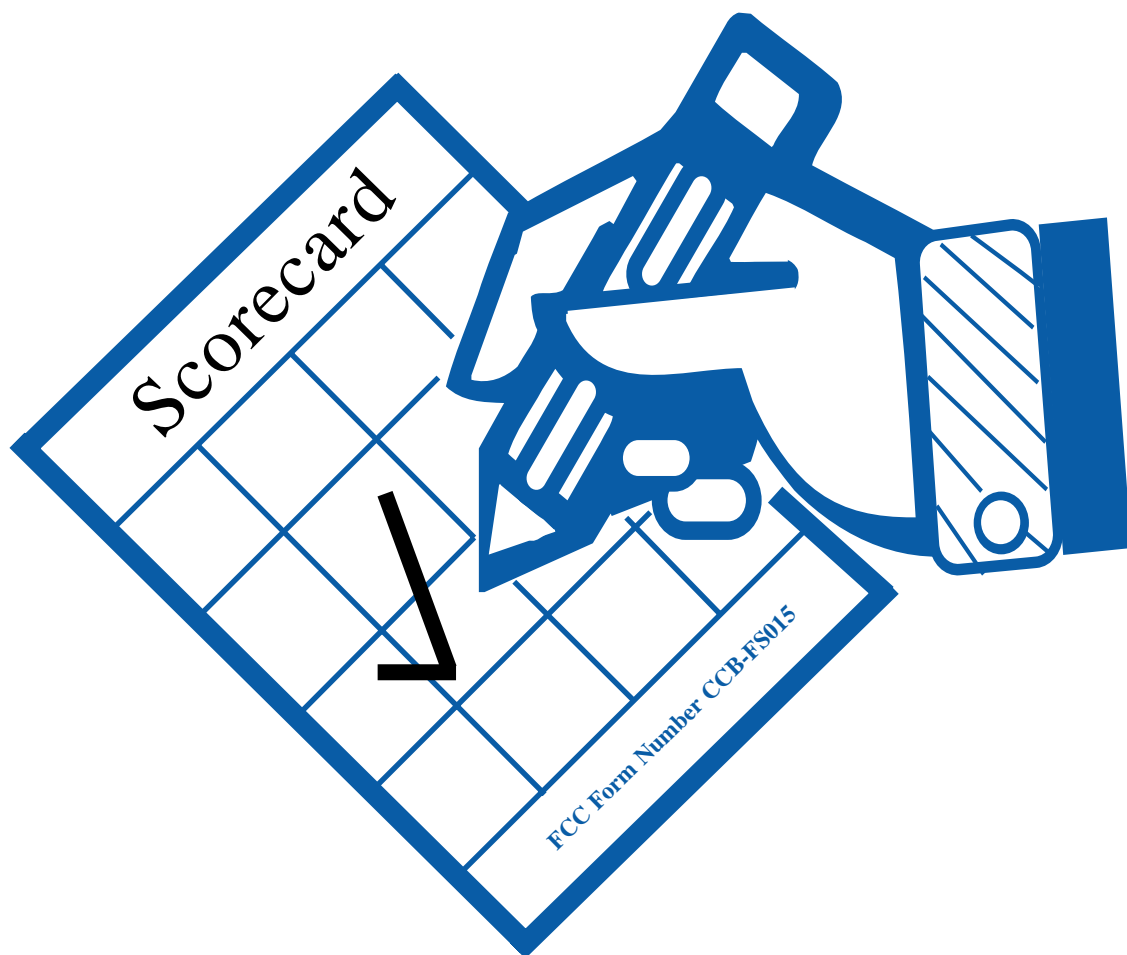
Common Carrier Scorecard

Produced by the Federal Communications Commission • Washington, D.C.
Common Carrier Bureau • Enforcement and Industry Analysis Divisions



Consumer Information About Telephone-Related Issues
Performance Information for Telephone Companies

November 1998



Highlights of This Issue

- Away-From-Home Telephone Calls
- Slamming
- Telephone Information Services
- Telephone Marketing Calls and Faxes
- How and Where to File Complaints
- FCC Consumer Complaint Statistics

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About The Scorecard

The Scorecard provides consumer information about telephone-related issues and performance information for individual telephone companies and for the common carrier industry as a whole. Consumers can use this information to make informed decisions about which companies and services they want to use. The common carrier industry can use this information to develop solutions to industry problems identified in consumer complaints.

This fourth edition of the Common Carrier Scorecard Report was prepared by the Enforcement and Industry Analysis Divisions of the FCC's Common Carrier Bureau.

During 1997, the top four categories of telephone-related consumer complaints and inquiries processed by the Enforcement Division's Consumer Protection Branch were unauthorized conversions of telephone service, a practice known as "slamming;" 900 number pay-per-call and other types of information services; operator service providers' rates and practices; and unsolicited telephone marketing calls and faxes.

Consumers contact the Consumer Protection Branch to obtain information, to resolve a complaint, or to express their opinions on telecommunications issues. FCC decision-makers review information provided by consumers and use that information to develop poli-

cies and rules that govern the practices of regulated companies and protect the interests of consumers.

The first section of the Scorecard provides an in-depth look into operator service providers, how to avoid high rates for away-from-home calls, and what actions consumers can take if problems occur.

The second section includes information about the actions the FCC has taken to protect consumers from slamming, abusive telephone information service practices, and unwanted telephone marketing calls and faxes.

The third section of the Scorecard analyzes 1997 consumer complaint and inquiry trends. During 1997, the Consumer Protection Branch processed 18,850 consumer telephone calls and 44,035 written consumer complaints and inquiries.

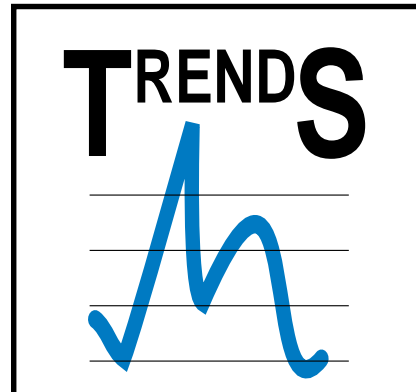
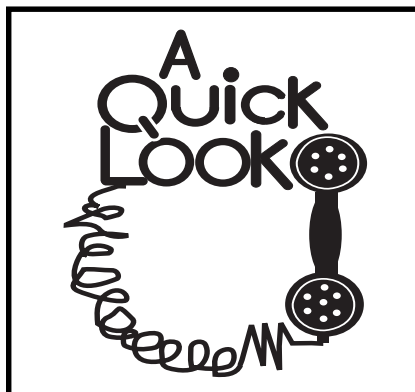
In absolute numbers, the largest companies generally received the most written complaints. After adjusting for company size, the complaint indices for the largest companies were far below the complaint indices for some of their smaller competitors.

The Scorecard also shows that companies can significantly reduce consumer complaints filed against them by: dealing with valid consumer complaints quickly without "passing the buck;" providing more information about their services to consumers; improving their customer service programs; and maintaining better billing and service records.

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Common Carrier Scorecard

An In-depth Look At Operator Service Providers

Operator Service Providers (OSPs) provide long distance service -- and in some cases local telephone services -- from pay telephones or telephones located in public places such as hotels, motels and hospitals.

You don't need to take a chance on high rates for away-from-home telephone calls



The FCC's rules ensure that interstate OSP services are provided to consumers in a fair and reasonable manner and that consumers have the opportunity to make informed choices in making interstate calls from public telephones served by OSPs.

You have the right to select the long distance company you want to use for away-from-home calls.

A number of long distance companies compete for your away-from-home telephone business.

Use your buying power wisely. Before you leave home -- shop around to find the best deal for the types of calls you plan to make from public telephone calls.

The long distance telephone company you selected to provide ser-

vice for your home or business telephone line may have a special calling plan for away-from-home calls. You should comparison shop with other companies to get the best rates for the types of calls you plan to place away from home.

Be sure to ask each company you contact to explain all charges for calls placed from public telephones -- such as charges for using a calling card, charges for using an operator, any minimum monthly charges for special calling plans, and the per-minute charges.

Once you select a company to handle your away-from-home calls, be sure to ask that company for instructions on how to place calls through that company from public telephones.

Information You Should Know About Calls Placed From Public Telephones

The OSP serving a public telephone generally will handle a call if "0" is dialed before dialing any other number.

Unless you use coins to pay for a call, the OSP will require you to charge the call to a calling card, call collect, or bill the call to a third party.

The OSP most likely will be able to bill you for a call at its rates if you use a calling card number that includes your local telephone number.

Calls handled by an OSP will be billed at the OSP's rates, not the rates of the company that issued the calling card -- unless the OSP issued the card.

No matter what type of calling card you use, the only way to be sure your call will be billed through your chosen long distance company is to follow that company's instructions for placing calls from public telephones.

Use Your Buying Power Wisely

Federal Law and the FCC's OSP Rules

In 1990, Congress enacted the Telephone Operator Consumer Services Improvement Act of 1990 -- also called TOCSIA. Congress enacted this federal law to respond to consumers' concerns about high charges for away-from-home calls placed from public telephones and the unfair and abusive practices used by some OSPs.

The FCC's rules implementing the provisions of this federal law ensure that interstate OSP services are provided to consumers in a fair and reasonable manner and that consumers have the opportunity to make informed

choices in making interstate calls from public telephones.

Be Phone Wise It Pays to Know the Rules

The following FCC consumer protection rules also apply to OSP services:

You have the right to place calls from a public telephone through the long distance company you want to use by dialing an access code -- such as an 800 number, a local number that begins with 950, or a seven-digit access number known as a 101-XXXX or a 10-10-XXX number.

Federal law and the FCC's OSP rules prohibit blocking of 800 or 950 access to long distance companies from public telephones. 101-XXXX or 10-10-XXX access must also be unblocked.

OSPs are required to immediately connect emergency calls to the appropriate emergency service.

OSPs may not bill for unanswered calls in areas where equal access (1+) service is available, nor may the OSP knowingly bill for unanswered calls where equal access is not available.

Sometimes an unanswered call will register as a billed call due to the equipment used by local telephone companies in areas where equal access is not available.

Stop

Look

Listen

Stop before making a call. Look at the printed information on or near the telephone.

Remember -- you have the right to select the long distance company you want to use for away-from-home calls.

Before you leave home, be sure to call the company you want to use for away-from-home calls and obtain instructions on how to place calls through that company from public telephones.



Consumer Watch Word

The FCC's rules require each public telephone provider to post the following information and disclosures on or near each public telephone, in plain view of consumers:

- ✓ The name, address and toll-free number of the OSP providing the service for that telephone;
- ✓ Rates for all operator-assisted calls are available upon request; and
- ✓ Consumers have a right to obtain access to the interstate long distance company of their choice, and may call that company using that public telephone.

Listen after you dial the number to determine which OSP is handling the call.

The FCC's rules require each OSP to identify itself at the beginning of a call and before any charges are incurred.

Beginning July 1, 1998, most OSPs must also orally notify callers of their right to obtain rate quotations for interstate calls before a call is connected and billed.

You will be able to find out the total price of a telephone call -- including any surcharges -- by simply pressing a button, such as the pound key, or staying on the line.

The price disclosure requirement will give you the opportunity to hang up on high rates and to "dial around" OSPs by following your chosen long distance company's instructions for placing calls from public telephones.

□ Beginning July 1, 1998, most consumers receiving collect calls from inmates in prisons, jails and other correctional or similar institutions will be able to obtain the price of the call by simply pressing a button or staying on the line.

OSPs providing operator services for inmate-only telephones will be required to orally notify the consumer to be billed for an inmate's collect call of his or her right to obtain rate quotations before the OSP connects and bills for an interstate collect call.

Consumers can then decide whether or not they want to accept the collect call. Consumers can also use the rate quotation information to decide whether or not they want to limit the length of the call.

Collect and Credit Card Calls Placed from Mexico

The FCC has received complaints from consumers about the high rates charged for collect and credit card calls placed from certain public telephones located in Mexico and billed in the United States.

The FCC is very concerned about the consumer issues raised in these complaints. However, the FCC's rules about posting consumer information do not apply to public telephones located outside the United States -- and the FCC does not have jurisdiction over the companies in Mexico that set the high rates.

The United States telephone companies that complete the calls in the United States are subject to FCC regulation and also are subject to the FCC's complaint process.

When the Consumer Protection Branch of the Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division receives consumer complaints about calls placed from Mexico and billed in the United States, it sends an "Official Notice of Informal Complaint" to each United States company involved with the complaint. In most cases, the Branch is able to have the consumer's bill for these calls adjusted to lower rates.

The FCC's OSP Rules Don't Protect You in Other Countries

Some public telephones in other countries may:

- ★ Only allow you to place credit card or collect calls to the United States.
- ★ Not allow you to contact your preferred telephone company by using your company's access code for that country.
- ★ Route all calls to a high-priced company that does not disclose its rates.



How to File OSP Service and Rate Complaints

The first step in resolving a complaint about OSP services or rates is to contact the OSP that provided the service or the company billing on behalf of the OSP. The company you contact may resolve your problem.

If the company does not resolve your problem, you may file a complaint with a state public utility commission or the FCC.

Your complaint about OSP services and rates or other types of telephone-related issues must be filed with the FCC in writing.

This section of the Scorecard will guide you through the process of collecting the information you must include with your complaint letter and provides the information you need to know to file your complaint with the proper regulatory agency.



Save Time

Don't delay action on your complaint by filing a complaint with the wrong regulatory agency.

If your complaint involves calls placed from one location to another location within the same state (**intrastate calls**), you should address your complaint to the public utility regulatory commission for the state where the service was provided.

This section of the Scorecard provides the telephone numbers for the state regulatory agencies.

Filing a Complaint with the FCC

You may file a written complaint with the FCC if your complaint concerns problems you had with placing calls from one state to another state (**interstate calls**).

There is no special form to fill out to file a complaint with the FCC. You can simply send a typed or legibly printed letter in your own words to:

**Federal Communications Commission
Common Carrier Bureau
Consumer Complaints
Mail Stop 1600A2
Washington, D.C. 20554**

The check list on the next page of this Scorecard lists the information you need to include in your complaint letter.

The FCC's Procedures for Processing Telephone-Related Consumer Complaints

The Consumer Protection Branch of the Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division assigns an "IC" file number to each consumer's complaint. This file number is included in correspondence responding to the complaint.

The Branch forwards complaints about services and rates regulated by the FCC to each company involved with the complaint that is within the FCC's jurisdiction or that may, in the staff's view, assist in the resolution of the complaint.

The Branch directs each company to:

- ✓ send a letter to the consumer who filed the complaint acknowledging receipt of the complaint;
- ✓ review all records and other information relating to the complaint;
- ✓ file a written response to the complaint issues with the FCC. Usually this response must be filed with the FCC within 30 days from the date the Branch sent the complaint to the company; and
- ✓ send a copy of the response to the consumer who filed the complaint.

After receiving the written responses, Branch staff members review the complaint file.

Appropriate FCC action will be taken if it appears that a company may not be in compliance with federal law, FCC rules and decisions, and industry practices.

The Branch sends written notification to the consumer who filed the complaint when the Branch closes the complaint file.

We ask consumers to:

- Understand that it takes time to thoroughly review the issues raised in individual complaint files.*
- Wait at least 30 days after receiving written responses from the company, or companies, involved with their complaint before contacting the Branch for status information about their complaint file.*
- Use their "IC" complaint file number when contacting the Branch for status or other information about their complaint.*

Use this Check List

To Collect the Information You
Need to Include in Your
Complaint Letter

Information you must include in your complaint letter about telephone-related issues.



You should also include this information in complaints about OSP services and rates.

Your Name
Company Name (where appropriate)
Street Address or Post Office Box
City, State, Zip Code
Daytime Telephone Number (including area code)



A brief description of the complaint.

The date(s) of the incidents involved with the complaint.

The names and addresses of all the companies involved with the complaint.

The names and telephone numbers of the company employees you talked with in an effort to resolve the complaint, and the dates you spoke with them.

The action requested, such as a credit or refund for disputed charges.

Copies of the telephone bills listing the disputed charges. The disputed charges should be circled on the copies of the bills.

Copies of correspondence received from the companies involved with the complaint and from state or federal agencies you contacted in an effort to resolve the complaint.

Copies of other documents involved with the complaint.

The number on the telephone and the telephone vendor (if identified on the telephone).

The exact numbers you dialed if you were unsuccessful in your attempts to place the call through your telephone company of choice.

The name of the OSP providing long distance service for the telephone you used.

The name, address and telephone number for the hotel, motel, hospital or other entity where the public telephone was located.

Filing a Complaint with a State Regulatory Agency

A complaint about OSP calls placed from one location to another location within the same state (**intrastate calls**) should be addressed to the public utility commission or state public service commission for the state where the service was provided.

Here's a list of telephone numbers for the state regulatory agencies.

Please keep in mind that the telephone numbers for these agencies may change from time to time -- especially as new area codes are added.

If you discover that a telephone number on this list is no longer correct, you can obtain the number from:

- the government section of your telephone directory;

- your local or state consumer offices;

- the FCC's National Call Center toll-free at 1-888-225-5322;

- the Common Carrier Bureau's Industry Analysis Division at (202) 418-0940; or

- the FCC's Web Site at: http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/consumer/news/state_puc.html

Telephone Numbers for State Regulatory Agencies

State	Main Telephone Number	Complaints Telephone Number	In-State Toll-Free Number
Alabama	(334) 242-5207	(334) 242-5211	
Alaska	(907) 276-6222		(800) 390-2782
Arizona	(602) 542-2237	(602) 542-4251	(800) 222-7000
Arkansas	(501) 682-2051		(800) 482-1164
California	(415) 703-2782	(415) 703-1170	(800) 649-7570
Colorado	(303) 894-2000		(800) 456-0858
Connecticut	(860) 827-1553		(800) 382-4586
Delaware	(302) 739-4247		
District of Columbia	(202) 626-5100		
Florida	(850) 413-6344	(850) 413-6100	(800) 342-3552
Georgia	(404) 656-4501		(800) 282-5813
Hawaii			
Hawaii (Big Island)	(808) 586-2020		(800) 974-4000
Kauai	(808) 274-3141		
Maui	(808) 984-2400		
Molokai, Lenai	(800) 468-4644		(800) 468-4644
Idaho	(208) 334-0300		(800) 432-0369
Illinois	(312) 814-2850		(800) 524-0795
Indiana	(317) 232-2701	(312) 232-2712	(800) 851-4268
Iowa	(515) 281-5979		

Telephone Numbers for State Regulatory Agencies

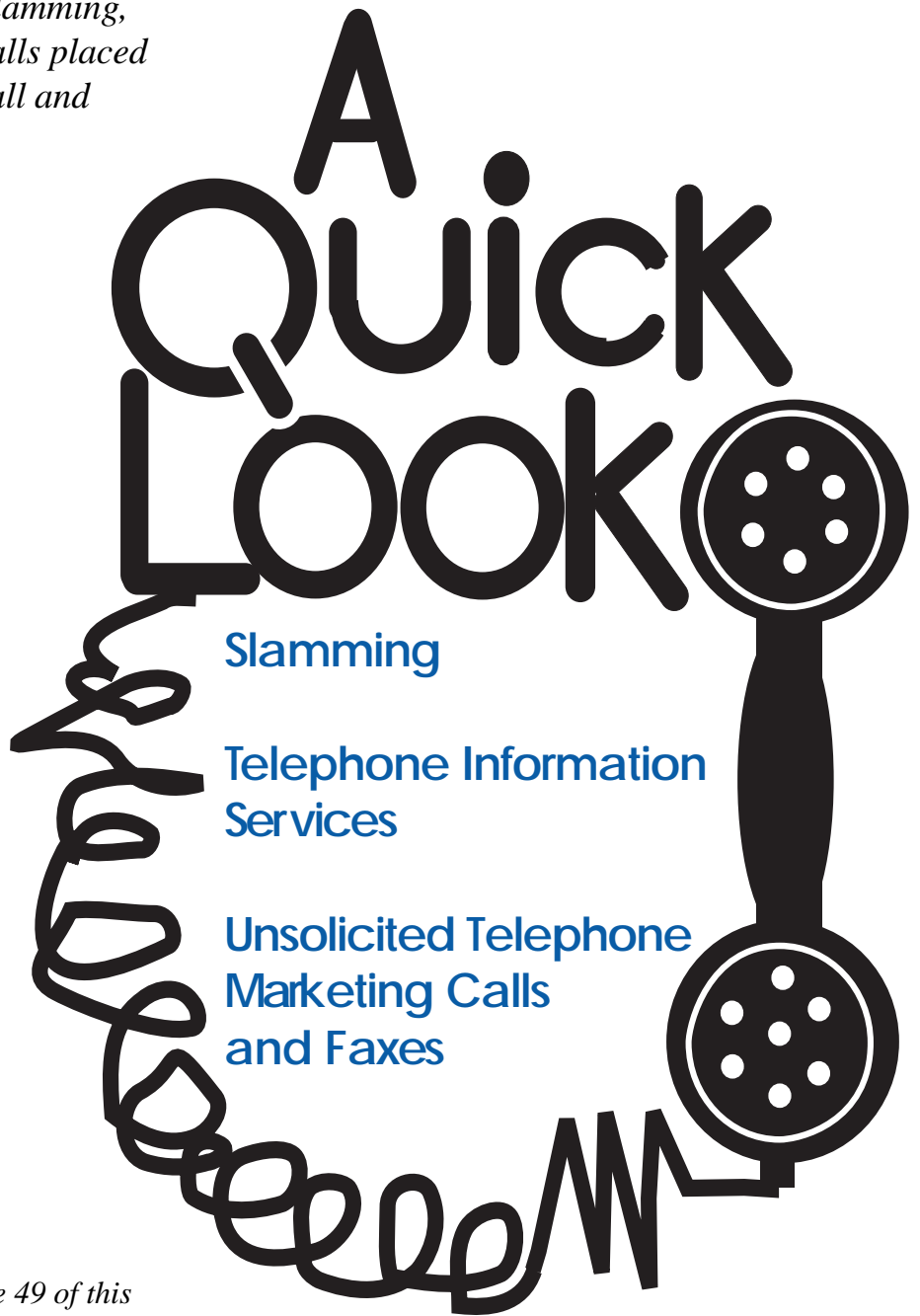
State	Main Telephone Number	Complaints Telephone Number	In-State Toll-Free Number
Kansas	(913) 271-3100	(913) 271-3140	
Kentucky	(502) 564-3940		
Louisiana	(504) 342-4427		(800) 256-2397
Maine	(207) 287-3831		(800) 452-4699
Maryland	(410) 767-8000		
Massachusetts	(617) 305-3500		
Michigan	(517) 334-6445		(800) 292-9555
Minnesota	(612) 296-7124	(612) 296-0406	(800) 657-3782
Mississippi	(601) 961-5400		
Missouri	(573) 751-3234	(573) 751-4308	
Montana	(406) 444-6199	(406) 444-6150	(800) 646-6150
Nebraska	(402) 471-3101		
Nevada	(702) 687-6001		
New Hampshire	(603) 271-2431		
New Jersey	(973) 648-2026	(973) 648-4436	(800) 624-0241
New Mexico	(505) 827-4500	(505) 827-4496	
New York	(518) 474-7080	(518) 474-5531	(800) 342-3377
North Carolina	(919) 733-4249	(919) 733-9277	
North Dakota	(701) 328-2400		
Ohio	(614) 466-3016		(800) 686-7826
Oklahoma	(405) 521-2211	(405) 521-2331	(800) 522-8154
Oregon	(503) 378-6611		(800) 522-2404
Pennsylvania	(717) 783-1740	(717) 783-5187	(800) 782-1110
Puerto Rico	(787) 756-1919		
Rhode Island	(401) 277-3500		
South Carolina	(803) 737-5100		
South Dakota	(605) 773-3201		(800) 332-1782
Tennessee	(615) 741-2904		
Texas	(512) 936-7000		(888) 782-8477
Utah	(801) 530-6716		
Vermont	(802) 828-2358	(802) 828-2322	(800) 622-4496
Virginia	(804) 371-9967	(804) 371-9675	(800) 552-7945
Washington	(360) 753-6423	(360) 664-1120	(800) 562-6150
West Virginia	(304) 340-0300		
Wisconsin	(608) 266-5481	(608) 266-2001	(800) 225-7729
Wyoming	(307) 777-7427		

This section of the Scorecard provides quick-look information about the actions the FCC has taken to protect consumers from slamming, unexpected charges for calls placed to 900 number pay-per-call and other types of telephone information services, and unwanted unsolicited telephone marketing calls and unsolicited advertisements sent to fax machines.

You can browse and download detailed information about these issues from the FCC's Web Site at http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/consumer_news/

Detailed information about 900 number pay-per-call and other types of telephone information services is also included in the December 1997 issue of the Common Carrier Scorecard. You can browse and download the 1997 issue of the Scorecard at http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/Reports/score_card_97.html

You can also request one of the FCC offices listed on page 49 of this Scorecard to send you copies of these documents.



Slamming

Slamming is a term used to describe any practice that changes a subscriber's preferred telephone company without the subscriber's knowledge or consent.

A subscriber's preferred telephone company may not lawfully be changed without his or her express consent.

Slammed consumers unable to use their preferred carrier may lose important service features or premiums, such as frequent flier miles, provided by their properly authorized carrier; get lower-quality service; or be charged higher rates for their long distance calls.

Slamming also distorts telecommunications markets by enabling companies engaged in misleading practices to increase their customer bases, revenues and profitability through illegal means.

The FCC is committed to ensuring that a subscriber's telephone service is not changed without his or her express consent and has adopted rules and policies to protect consumers from slamming.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 substantially bolstered the

FCC's efforts to eliminate slamming. This federal law expanded the scope of the FCC's authority over slamming-related issues to all telecommunications carriers, including local carriers.

The law provides that no telecommunications carrier shall submit or execute a change in a consumer's selection of a provider of telephone exchange service or telephone toll service, except in accordance with the FCC's verification procedures.

The law also provides that any telecommunications carrier that violates the FCC's verification procedures and that collects charges for telephone exchange service or telephone toll service from a consumer shall be liable to the consumer's original preferred carrier for an amount equal to all charges paid by the consumer to the unauthorized carrier.

These provisions generate marketplace incentives for the carriers to resolve the problem of slamming prior to FCC intervention and enforcement.

Proposed Additional Consumer Safeguards

The FCC has asked for comment from the public on issues related to implementation of this law and proposed additional safeguards to

protect consumers from slamming.

For instance, the FCC asked for comment on issues such as whether the current procedures used to verify long distance carrier changes should be strengthened; whether unauthorized carriers should be liable for any premiums, such as frequent flier miles, that slammed consumers would have received from their authorized carriers; and whether slammed consumers should be liable for any unpaid charges assessed by unauthorized carriers.

The proposed new rules would provide further economic disincentives for carriers to slam; impose more rigorous verification requirements in order to protect consumers from unscrupulous carriers who use deceptive telemarketing practices; implement sensibly the statutory prohibition against slamming by any telecommunications carrier; protect the rights of consumers to exercise choice in telecommunications carriers; and ultimately help promote full and fair competition among telecommunications carriers in the marketplace by ensuring that consumers' choices are honored.

The FCC is expected to adopt additional anti-slamming rules by the end of 1998.

FCC Slamming Enforcement Actions

The FCC has consistently emphasized the critical importance of enforcement through its complaint process to ensure that companies regulated by the FCC do not charge unjust and unreasonable rates; engage in unjust, unreasonable, or unreasonably discriminatory practices; or otherwise conduct their regulated operations in a manner that may be harmful to consumers and to competition.

The Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division's investigations of consumer slamming complaints continue to lead to a series of enforcement actions against responsible carriers.

Ten companies accused of slamming have entered into consent decrees and agreed to make payments to the United States Treasury totalling \$1,260,000; five Notices of Apparent Liability have been issued for apparent slamming violations, with combined proposed forfeiture penalties of \$3,800,000; and five Notices of Forfeiture have been issued, with combined forfeiture penalties of \$5,961,500.

The FCC also revoked the operating authority of a group of commonly-owned companies due to the number and nature of slamming complaints.

Notices of Apparent Liability

Company Name	Proposed Forfeiture Amount
All American Telephone Company, Inc.	\$1,040,000
Amer-I-Net Services Corporation	1,360,000
Brittan Communications International Corp.	1,120,000
Heartline Communications, Inc. ¹	200,000
Minimum Rate Pricing, Inc.	80,000

Forfeitures

Company Name	Forfeiture Amount
Excel Telecommunications, Inc.	\$ 80,000
Fletcher Companies (slamming and related violations)	5,681,500
Long Distance Services, Inc. (Troy, Michigan) ¹	80,000
Long Distance Services, Inc. (Virginia)	80,000
Target Telecom, Inc.	40,000

Consent Decrees

Company Name	Voluntary Payments to the U.S. Treasury ²
AT&T Corp.	\$ 30,000
Cherry Communications, Inc. ¹	500,000
Home Owners Long Distance, Inc.	30,000
LCI International Worldwide Telecommunications	15,000
Matrix Telecom, Inc.	30,000
MCI Telecommunications Corp.	30,000
Nationwide Long Distance, Inc. ¹	30,000
Operator Communications, Inc. d/b/a Oncor	500,000
TELCAM, Telecommunications Company of the Americas	15,000
Winstar Gateway Network, Inc.	80,000

Other Actions


The FCC revoked the operating authority of the following group of companies owned and/or operated by Daniel Fletcher: CCN, Inc.; Church Discount Group, Inc.; Discount Calling Card, Inc.; Donation Long Distance, Inc.; Long Distance Services, Inc.; Monthly Discounts, Inc.; Monthly Phone Services, Inc.; and Phone Calls, Inc.

Note 1: The FCC has been advised that these companies filed for bankruptcy.

Note 2: The companies listed under Consent Decrees also voluntarily agreed to provide additional consumer protections.

900 NUMBER PAY-PER-CALL

AND OTHER TYPES OF TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICES



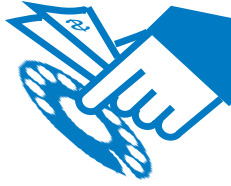
Information services offer telephone callers the opportunity to obtain a wide variety of telephone programs that provide recorded or live information and entertainment.

Examples of information services include medical, stock market, sports, and product information. Also available are so-called “adult” services, “chat” lines, and psychic advice.

The FCC and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have rules to protect consumers from abusive information service industry practices.

Know The Difference

The terms “pay-per-call” and “information services” are often used interchangeably.



Pay-per-call is a specific type of information service. Under federal law, pay-per-call services are those information services that are offered only through 900 numbers and carry a fee greater than the cost of simply transmitting the call. The fee may be either a per-minute charge or a flat fee per call.

Information services is a broad term that includes 900 number pay-per-call services and services that are offered by dialing numbers other than 900 numbers.

The FCC’s Information Services Rules

The FCC regulates United States telephone companies that are involved in transmitting and billing interstate pay-per-call and other types of information services.

The FCC’s rules governing 900 number pay-per-call and other types of information services are designed to ensure that consumers are fully informed about the information services they choose to purchase and are protected from unexpected charges for calls placed to information services.

The FCC’s rules require that any interstate service -- other than telephone company directory assistance service -- that charges consumers for information or entertainment must be provided through a 900 number, unless the service is offered under what is called a “presubscription or comparable arrangement.”

A presubscription or comparable arrangement may be a preexisting contract by which the caller has “subscribed” to the information service -- or may be the caller’s authorization to bill an information service call to a prepaid account or to a credit, debit, charge, or calling card number.

Toll-Free Numbers

The FCC’s rules protect consumers from unexpected charges for calls placed to toll-free numbers.

The FCC’s rules generally prohibit the use of 800 numbers, or any other number advertised or widely understood to be toll-free, to charge callers for information services.

Under the FCC’s rules, callers can be charged for these types of calls if the caller has a written agreement to obtain and be charged for the service -- or has agreed to pay for the service by prepaid ac-

count, or through a debit, credit, or calling card.

When a consumer calls a toll-free number -- the information provider cannot call the consumer back collect for the provision of audio or data information services, products, or simultaneous voice conversation services such as chat lines. Also, callers to toll-free numbers may not be connected to 900 pay-per-call numbers.

900 Number Blocking Service

The FCC’s rules require local telephone companies to offer consumers, where it is technically feasible to do so, the option of blocking access to 900 number services.

This important safeguard enables consumers to protect themselves against unauthorized 900 number calls placed from their telephone lines.

Disconnection of Telephone Service

The FCC’s rules prohibit telephone companies from disconnecting a telephone subscriber’s local or long distance telephone service due to the subscriber’s failure to pay 900 number charges, charges for pre-subscribed information services, or disputed charges for interstate information services provided on a collect basis.

Bills for Information Services

The FCC's rules require telephone companies that bill consumers for interstate pay-per-call and presubscribed information services to list those charges in a portion of the bill that is separate from local and long distance telephone charges. This requirement enables consumers to easily identify information service charges included with their telephone bill.

In addition, telephone companies must include with the bill information outlining consumers' rights and responsibilities with respect to payment of information service charges.

The FTC's 900 Number Rule

The FTC also regulates the pay-per-call industry and has created the 900 Number Rule to protect the rights of consumers regarding pay-per-call transactions.

FTC brochures regarding 900 numbers, 800 numbers, international information services, fair debt collection, and fair credit billing may be obtained by:

- ✓ writing to the Federal Trade Commission, Public Reference Branch, Drop H240, Washington, D.C. 20580;
- ✓ calling the FTC's Consumer Response Center at (202)326-3128; or
- ✓ visiting the FTC's Web Site at <http://www.ftc.gov/>

Here are some quick tips that can save you money

❑ Carefully review your telephone bill every month. Look for company names you do not recognize and charges for information service calls you did not place or authorize.

If you identify any billing problems, immediately call the companies listed on the bill. Ask the companies to explain the charges and request a billing adjustment for incorrect charges.

❑ Be aware that some information providers may employ an independent billing company or a collection agency to pursue collection of information service charges removed from your telephone bill.

❑ Educate children and other individuals who make telephone calls from your telephone line about the charges for calls placed to information services.

❑ Protect yourself against unauthorized 900 number calls placed from your telephone line. Subscribe to your local telephone company's 900 number blocking service if you do not want to incur these charges.

❑ Carefully read advertisements for information services. Some advertisements for information services do not disclose the charges for calling the advertised numbers.

❑ Contact your local and long distance companies and ask whether it is possible to block the placement of long distance or international calls from your telephone line. Before requesting this service, consider whether you need to place calls to friends, family members or businesses in other states or countries.

❑ Don't call telephone numbers with 809, 758 or 664 area codes or numbers beginning with 011 unless you want to place a call to another country.

❑ Listen to the preamble or introductory message when calling a 900 number or other type of information service number. Immediately hang up if you are not interested in the service or do not want to pay any charges for the call.

❑ Be suspicious of offers for free calls or services. If it sounds too good to be true -- it probably is. 900 number services always involve charges to the caller -- even if you are calling to claim a "free" prize. Other types of information services are rarely free even if they are provided over toll-free numbers.

❑ Think twice before requesting a return call. Some information service companies use an option for callers to receive information by requesting a return call. If you select this option and the call is returned, you may be charged for a collect call.

❑ Exercise caution when accepting an instant calling card. You may dial an advertised number and be offered a "calling card" that can be used immediately to access the advertised information.

These calling cards have numerical codes -- sometimes based on the telephone number of the line from which the call was placed -- that are used to charge callers for the information service call.

900 Number Pay-Per-Call and Other Types of Telephone Information Services

Topic	Issue	Where To Go for Information And To File Complaints
900 Number Pay-Per-Call Services	Disconnection of local or long distance telephone service for non-payment of 900 number charges	Federal Communications Commission
	Charges not separately identified on the telephone bill	Federal Communications Commission
900 Number Pay-Per-Call Blocking Services	Unable to obtain service from the local telephone company to block 900 calls placed from residential or business telephones	Federal Communications Commission
	Received a bill for a 900 number call even though blocking service was ordered from the local telephone company	Federal Communications Commission
All Other Issues Involving 900 Numbers		Federal Trade Commission
Information Services Other Than 900 Number Pay-Per-Call Services	976 and other local or intrastate information services	State public utility commission
	Charges for calls placed to 800 or other toll-free numbers	Federal Communications Commission
	Charges for calls placed to international numbers	Federal Communications Commission

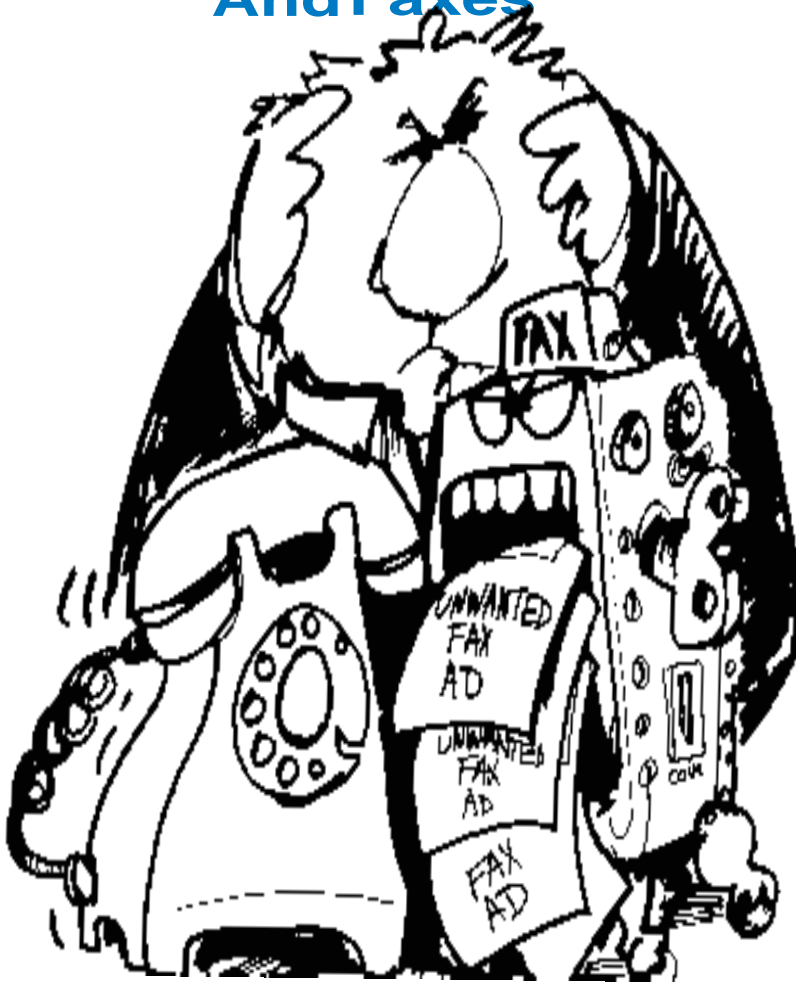
Filing a Complaint With Your State Regulatory Agency

You can obtain the telephone number and address for your state regulatory agency from your local or state consumer offices or the government section of your telephone directory. The telephone number for your state regulatory agency can also be found in the How to File Complaints section of this Scorecard and on the FCC's web site at http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/consumer_news/state_puc.html

Filing a Complaint With The Federal Trade Commission

Complaints about issues regulated by the Federal Trade Commission should be directed to the Federal Trade Commission at the following address: Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, Drop H285, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580.

Unsolicited Telephone Marketing Calls And Faxes



Federal Law and the FCC's Rules Protect Consumers

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) is a federal law that was enacted on December 20, 1991 to address consumer concerns about the growing volume of unsolicited telephone marketing calls and the increasing use of automated and prerecorded telephone calls.

The TCPA imposes restrictions on the use of automatic telephone dialing systems (also called autodialers), artificial or prerecorded voice messages, and telephone facsimile (fax) machines to send unsolicited advertisements.

The FCC adopted rules and regulations, effective December 20, 1992, implementing the TCPA. Different rules and regulations apply to calls placed to homes and calls placed to businesses. These rules and regulations do not apply to unsolicited messages sent via E-mail or the Internet.

Unsolicited Telephone Marketing Calls

Sales and other organizations commonly place unsolicited telephone marketing calls to potential customers or donors. Some consumers may welcome these calls, while others may not.

Telemarketers may obtain your telephone number in a variety of ways. For instance, the store where you purchased products may include your name, address and telephone number on marketing lists sold to other organizations. Also, telemarketers sometimes call all numbers in numerical order for a neighborhood or telephone exchange.



Restrictions on Telemarketing Calls Placed to Your Home

The FCC's rules prohibit telephone solicitations before 8:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. (local time at your home). Prerecorded unsolicited calls placed to home telephone numbers are unlawful, subject to limited exceptions.

Solicitor Identification Requirements

The FCC's rules require persons or entities making a telephone solicitation to your home to provide the following information:

- the name of the individual caller;
- the name of the person or entity on whose behalf the call is being made; and
- a telephone number or address at which that person or entity may be contacted.

Also, any person, business, or entity using an autodialer to transmit an artificial (computerized) voice or prerecorded voice message -- including such calls placed to business numbers -- must clearly state its identity at the beginning of the message, and its telephone number or address during or after the message.

The telephone number provided cannot be the number of the autodialer or prerecorded message player which placed the call, and cannot be a 900 number or any other number for which charges exceed local or long distance transmission charges.

Here are some actions you can take to protect yourself from unwanted telephone marketing calls placed to your home telephone number and unwanted advertisements sent to your fax machine:

- ☐ Ask the solicitor to stop calling your telephone number or sending unsolicited fax advertisements.

You should tell **each caller** placing live solicitation calls to your home telephone not to call again and ask to be placed on the caller's do-not-call list. This should stop all calls from the caller and affiliated entities.

The **FCC's Do-Not-Call Rules** require the caller to keep a record of this request for ten years. (Tax-exempt nonprofit organizations are not required to keep do-not-call lists.) The caller may not make any more calls to your home after the do-not-call request is made.

- ☐ Find out if your state permits you to file suit to stop solicitation calls or faxes and/or file suit for damages. The penalty specified in the TCPA for violations of the TCPA and the FCC's rules is generally \$500 in damages or actual monetary losses (whichever is greater).

- ☐ Request the Direct Marketing Association to add you to its list of consumers who do not want to receive telemarketing calls. You can be placed on this list by sending your name, telephone number (including the area code) and address (including the zip code) to:

Telephone Preference Service
Direct Marketing Association
P.O. Box 9014
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9014

This action should reduce the number of unwanted calls, but may not stop all unwanted calls.

How You Can

STOP

Unwanted Calls
And Fax Ads



- ☐ Obtain information about the Federal Trade Commission's Telemarketing Sales Rule via the World Wide Web at <http://www.ftc.gov> or by writing to:

Federal Trade Commission
Public Reference Branch
Drop H240
Washington, D.C. 20580

- ☐ Write to the Federal Trade Commission at the following address to report false or deceptive telephone solicitation sales practices:

Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Response Center
Drop H285
Washington, D.C. 20580

- ☐ Contact your local FBI or state attorney general's office about fraudulent telephone solicitation practices.
- ☐ Send complaints about information received through the United States Postal Service in connection with fraudulent telephone solicitation practices to:

Mail Fraud
Chief Postal Inspector
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260-2181

Fax Messages



No person may transmit an advertisement describing the commercial availability or quality of any property, goods, or services to your fax machine without your prior express permission or invitation.

Unsolicited Advertisements Sent to Home and Business Fax Machines

The FCC's rules prohibit the transmission of unsolicited advertisements to fax machines.

No person may transmit an advertisement describing the commercial availability or quality of any property, goods, or services to your fax machine without your prior express permission or invitation.

Established Business Relationship and Faxes

If you have an established business relationship with the person or entity sending the message, an invitation or permission to receive unsolicited fax advertisements is presumed to exist.

You have an established business relationship with a person or entity if you have made an inquiry, application, purchase or transaction regarding products or services offered by such person or entity.

You can end this relationship by telling the person or entity that you do not want any more unsolicited advertisements sent to your fax machine.

Identification Required on Fax Messages

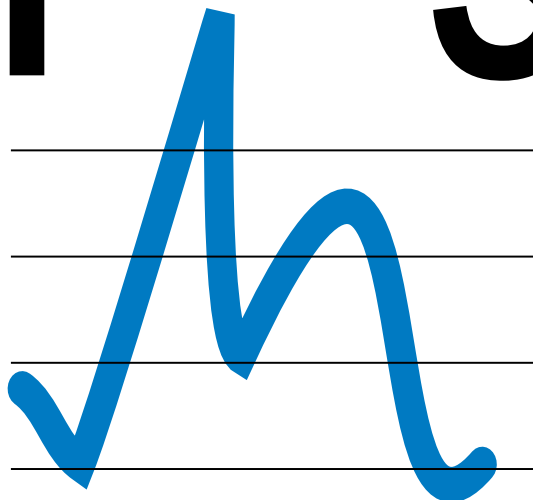
The FCC's rules require that any message sent to a fax machine must clearly mark on the first page or on each page of the message:

- the date and time the transmission is sent;
- the identity of the sender; and
- the telephone number of the sender or of the sending fax machine.

All fax machines manufactured on or after December 20, 1992 and all facsimile modem boards manufactured on or after December 13, 1995 must have the capability to clearly mark such identifying information on the first page or on each page of the transmission.

**Common Carrier
Scorecard**

TRENDS



TRENDS IN CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

This section of the Scorecard describes trends in complaints and inquiries processed during 1997 by the Consumer Protection Branch of the Common Carrier Bureau's Enforcement Division. This section also provides an analysis of how companies involved with telephone-related complaints performed individually and as a group.

Consumers contact the Branch to obtain information, to resolve a complaint, or to express their opinions on important telecommunications issues. The FCC's decision-makers review information provided by consumers and use that information to develop policies and rules that govern the practices of regulated companies and protect the interests of consumers.

While American consumers make billions of telephone calls every year, the FCC received less than one telephone-related consumer complaint for every two million toll calls made.

Analysis of Consumer Complaints



Companies can help consumers by:

- *immediately resolving valid consumer complaints without “passing the buck;”*
 - *providing more information to consumers about their services;*
 - *improving their customer service programs; and*
 - *maintaining better billing and service records.*
-

A number of consumers filing complaints with the FCC about telephone-related issues indicate that they have already requested at least one of the companies involved with their complaint to resolve the problem -- and that their complaints were not resolved by the contacted companies.

Most of the FCC’s consumer correspondence about telephone-related issues consists of complaints about the rates and/or practices of telecommunications companies.

The analysis of written complaints by company in this section and the appendices of this Scorecard is based on consumer complaints served on companies by the Consumer Protection Branch.

The Branch serves a complaint by issuing an “Official Notice of Informal Complaint” to all companies identified in the complaint that are within the FCC’s jurisdiction or that may, in the staff’s view, assist in the resolution of the complaint.

Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

Appendix A to this Scorecard lists the 108 companies served more than 50 complaints during 1997. Appendix B lists the 19 companies -- other than local telephone companies -- served more than 50 complaints, and that had publicly disclosed revenue figures.

Appendix C lists the 61 companies served more than 50 slamming complaints during 1997, and Appendix D lists the 22 companies served more than 25 OSP complaints.

The appendices also show communications revenue and complaint indices. The Description of Appendices section of this Scorecard explains how complaint indices were calculated.

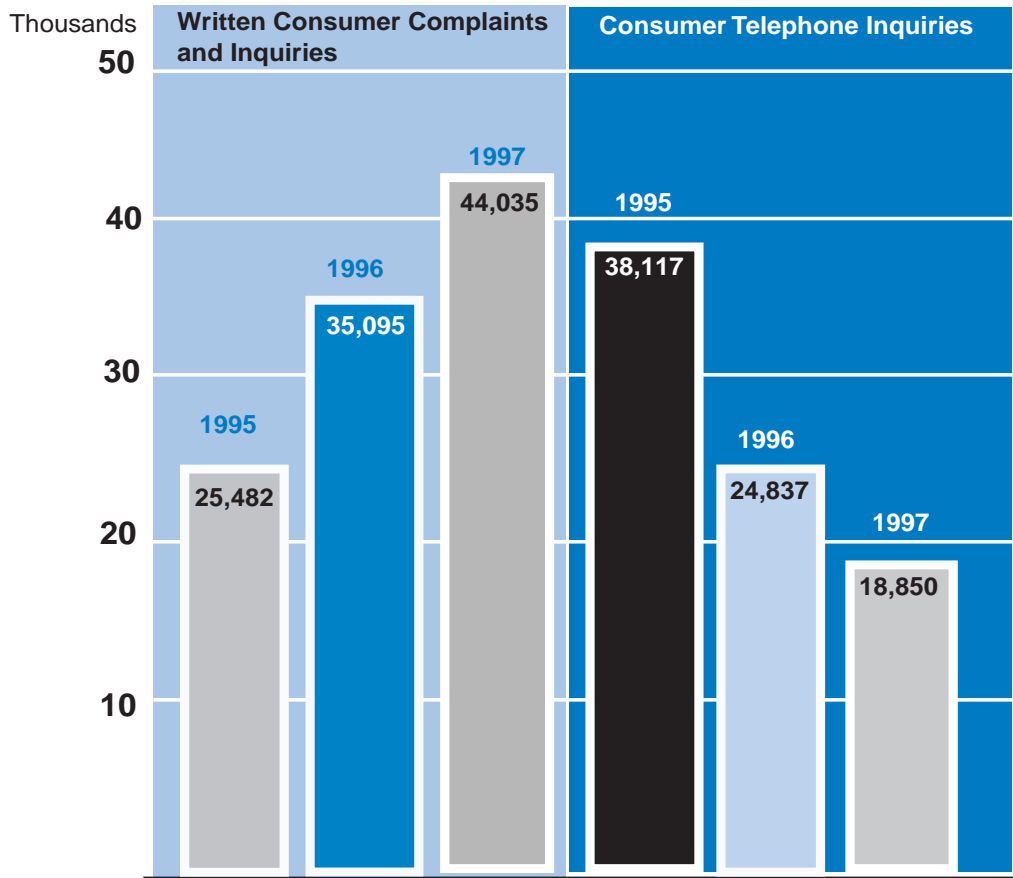
Consumer Complaints and Inquiries Reach the FCC in Several Ways

During 1997, the Consumer Protection Branch processed 44,035 written complaints and inquiries. By comparison, the Branch processed 35,095 written complaints and inquiries during 1996 and 25,482 during 1995.

The majority of written complaints and inquiries were filed by consumers on their own behalf. Written complaints and inquiries were also sent to the FCC on behalf of consumers by members of Congress; the President; and various state, local and federal agencies.

During 1997 the Branch processed 18,850 consumer telephone calls. By comparison, the Branch processed 24,837 consumer telephone calls during 1996 and 38,117 calls during 1995. The reduction in the number of consumers calling the Branch during 1996 and 1997 may be due to the launch of the FCC's National Call Center's toll-free 1-888-225-5322 number (1-888-CALL-FCC).

Figure 1 Consumer Complaints and Inquiries



Consumers Call the Consumer Protection Branch for Information on a Variety of Issues

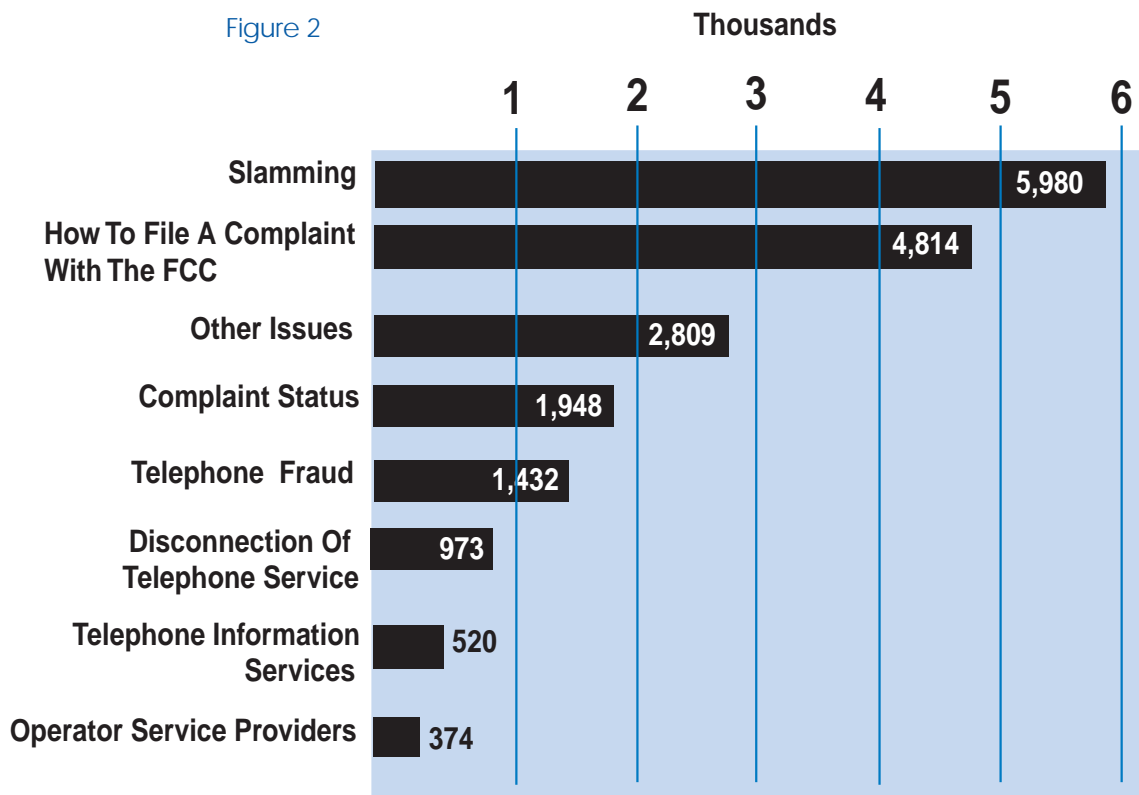
The 18,850 consumers who called the Consumer Protection Branch's Consumer Hotline during 1997 requested information on a variety of issues.



Figure 2 shows the types of information consumers requested and the number of consumers who requested that information.

Under federal law and the FCC's rules, consumers must send a written complaint to the FCC about telephone-related issues. The Branch generally cannot process a complaint that is received via a telephone call.

Figure 2



Issues Raised in Written Consumer Complaints and Inquiries

The Consumer Protection Branch processed 8,940 more written complaints and inquiries during 1997 than in 1996.

Most consumer complaints and inquiries fall into a few broad categories. The relative volume for specific categories changes over time, but the total number of written complaints and inquiries has been rising rapidly for several years.

Figure 3 shows that of the 44,035 written complaints and inquiries processed by the Branch in 1997:

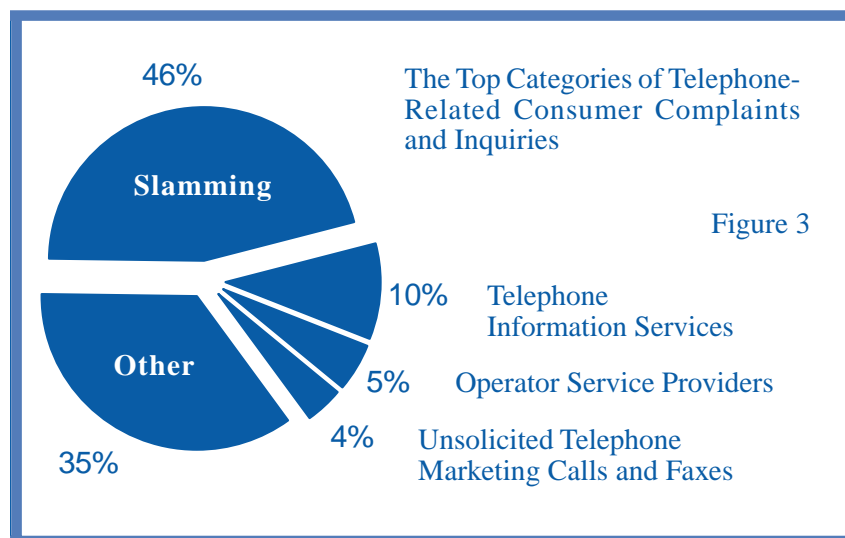
√ 46 percent, or 20,475, involved slamming issues;

√ 10 percent, or 4,282, involved 900 number pay-per-call services, other types of interstate information services, and international information services;

√ 5 percent, or 2,262, involved interstate operator service provider (OSP) rates and services; and

√ 4 percent, or 1,789, involved unsolicited telephone marketing calls and faxes.

The remaining 35 percent, or 15,227, of the complaints and inquiries processed by the Branch involved issues such as: interstate and international services and rates; the marketing and advertis-



The FCC has taken actions to protect consumers against:

- *slamming;*
- *unexpected charges for calls placed to 900 numbers and other types of telephone information services;*
- *high rates charged by some OSPs; and*
- *unwanted unsolicited telephone marketing calls and unsolicited advertisements sent to fax machines.*

ing practices used by some regulated companies; and complaints that were not within the FCC's jurisdiction and that were forwarded by the Branch to other federal and state agencies.

By comparison, of the 35,095 written complaints and inquiries processed by the Branch during 1996, 36 percent, or 12,795, involved slamming issues; 13 percent, or 4,621, involved 900 number pay-per-call and other types of information services; 12 percent, or 4,132, involved OSP rates and services; 4 percent, or 1,530, involved unsolicited telephone marketing calls and faxes; and 35 percent, or 12,017, involved other issues.

Long Distance Companies Served More Than 50 Complaints

While the requirement to file USF worksheets is not based on a simple revenue threshold, all carriers with more than \$2 million in intrastate and interstate consumer toll revenues are required to file USF Worksheets and revenue information with the FCC.

During 1997, 108 companies were served more than 50 complaints. This figure includes 50 long distance companies that had filed Universal Service Fund (USF) Worksheets by May 11, 1998.

Appendix A to this Scorecard explains how the complaint indices were calculated for the 50 long distance companies and organizes these companies into 12 groups in order of declining complaint indices.

The complaint indices for these companies range from 24.9 to 0.2 complaints per million dollars of revenue.

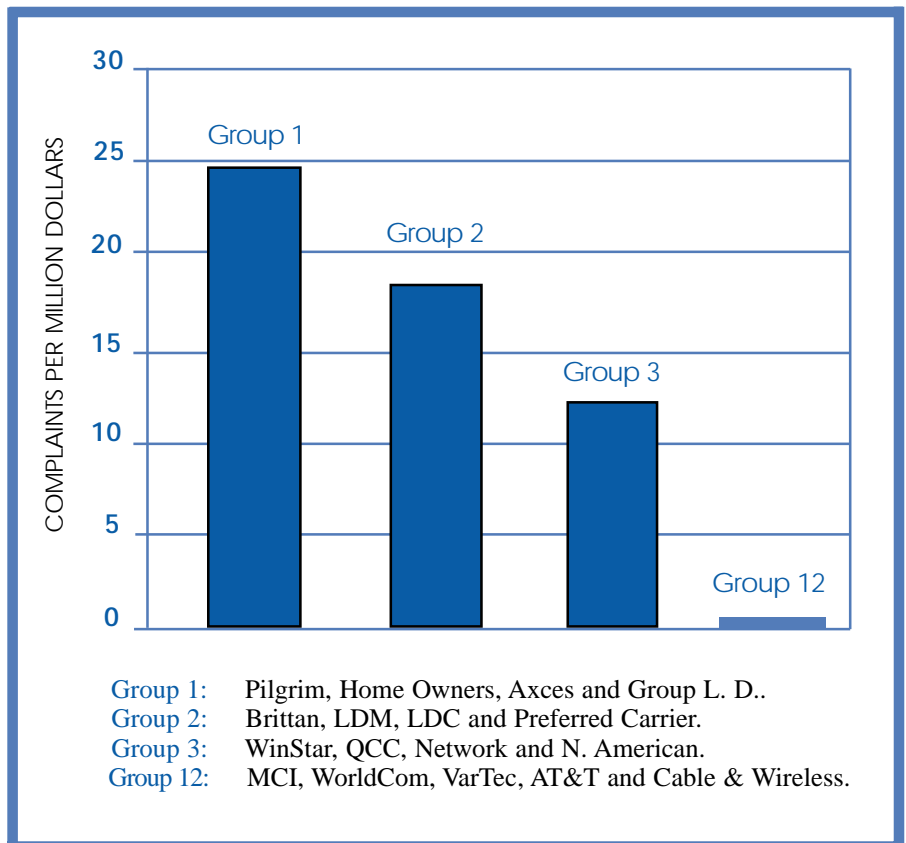
Figure 4 shows the companies with the highest and lowest complaint indices.

The five long distance companies with the lowest and best complaint index are listed under Group 12.

The 12 long distance companies with the highest complaint indices are listed in Groups 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 4 also shows that some of the largest long distance companies -- which are listed under Group 12 -- have a group complaint index far below the group complaint indices for the smaller long distance companies listed under Groups 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 4
Long Distance Company
Complaint Indices



Note: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

Other Companies and Billing Agents Served More Than 50 Complaints

Appendix A lists under the “Other Companies” category 36 companies served more than 50 complaints during 1997 that did not file USF Fund Worksheets before May 11, 1998.

While the USF Worksheet reporting requirement is not based on a simple revenue threshold, all carriers with more than \$2 million in intrastate and interstate consumer toll revenues should have filed USF Worksheets.

Some of the companies listed in Appendix A should have filed USF Worksheets, but had not done so by May 11, 1998. Accordingly, the FCC is reviewing this matter. Any carriers found to be in violation of the FCC’s rules will be subject to appropriate sanctions.

Figure 5
Complaints Served on Other
Companies

Company	Total Complaints Served
L.D. Services (Michigan)*	1,688
Trans National (Business Discount Plan)	1,182
American Business Alliance (acquired by Tel-Save)	1,119
L.D. Services (Virginia) -- a Fletcher Company	963
Minimum Rate Pricing, Inc.	812
Heartline Communications, Inc.*	623
L.D. Services, Inc.	420
Network Access, Inc.	275
Integrated Tele Services	256
Inovate Telecom, Inc.	247
Future Telephone Communications, LTD.	241
Nationwide Telecom, Inc.	199
US Teleconnect	162
Network Utilization Services	151
Discount Network Services	143
Least Cost Routing, Inc.	130
Corporate Services	125
VIP Telephone Network, Inc.	115
HSS Vending	100

* The FCC has been advised that these companies filed for bankruptcy.

Figure 5 shows the 19 companies in the “Other Companies” category that were served 100 or more complaints during 1997. If the companies listed in Figure 5 are carriers -- and if their consumer toll revenues were greater than \$2 million -- they should have filed USF Worksheets.

If the consumer toll revenues for these companies are \$2 million or less, their complaint indices would be extremely high -- ranging from 50 to 844 complaints per million dollars of revenue. These complaint indices are much higher than the highest complaint index (24.9) listed in Appendix A.

Some companies do not bill their customers directly, but rely on billing agents to subcontract with

Note: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

the local telephone companies to arrange billing and collection for services rendered. Appendix A lists under the “Billing Agents” category the 10 billing agents served more than 50 complaints in 1997.

Long Distance Companies Served More Than 50 Slamming Complaints

Slamming is a term used to describe any practice that changes a subscriber's preferred telephone company without the subscriber's knowledge or consent.

During 1997, the highest category of consumer complaints and inquiries processed by the Consumer Protection Branch was slamming.

The second section of this Scorecard includes information about the actions the FCC has taken to protect consumers against slamming.

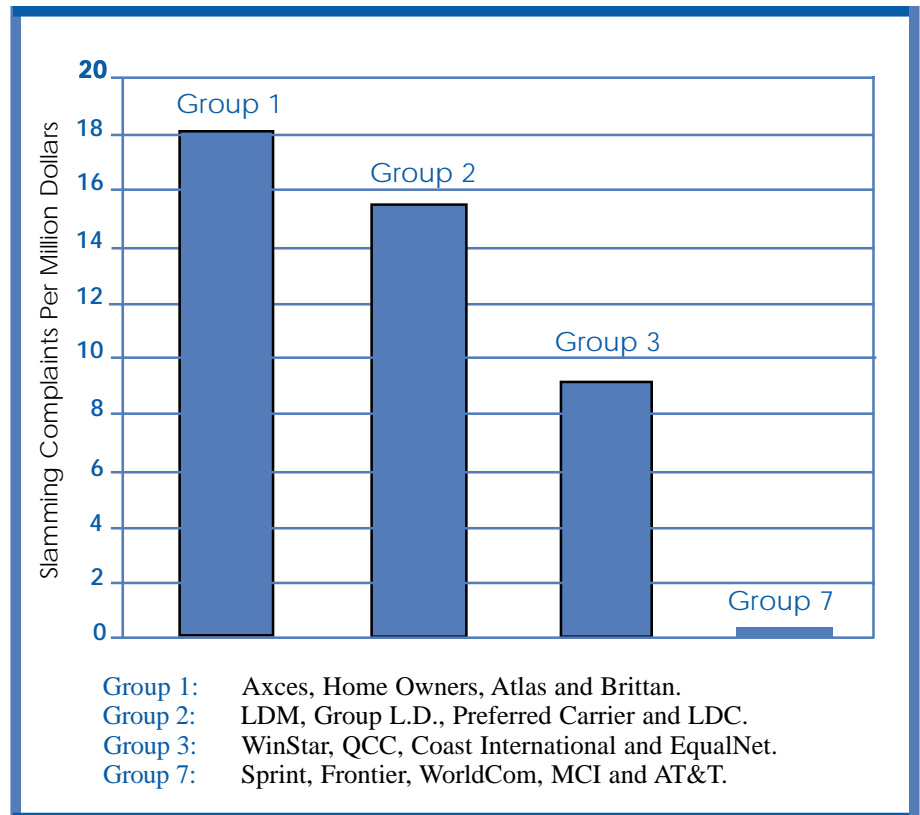
Figure 6
Long Distance Company
Slamming Complaint Indices

The Branch processed 20,475 slamming complaints and inquiries during 1997. This figure represents approximately 46 percent of the total number of written telephone-related consumer complaints and inquiries processed by the Branch during this time period.

Appendix C to this Scorecard lists the long distance companies served more than 50 slamming complaints and the number of slamming complaints served on each listed company.

Appendix C organizes the long distance companies that filed Universal Service Fund (USF) worksheets by May 11, 1998 into seven groups with combined toll revenue and a group complaint index for each group. The group complaint indices range from 18.1 to 0.1 complaints per million dollars of revenue.

Figure 6 shows the companies with the highest and lowest complaint indices. The five long distance companies with the lowest and best complaint index are listed under Group 7. The 12 long distance companies with the highest complaint indices are listed in Groups 1, 2 and 3.



Note 1: The slamming complaint indices are based on toll revenues.

Note 2: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

Other Companies and Billing Agents Served More Than 50 Slamming Complaints

Appendix C lists under the “Other Companies” category 18 companies served more than 50 slamming complaints that did not file USF worksheets before May 11, 1998.

As previously indicated, while the USF Worksheet reporting requirement is not based on a simple revenue threshold, all carriers with more than \$2 million in intrastate and interstate consumer toll revenues should have filed USF Worksheets.

Figure 7
Slamming Complaints
Served on Other Companies

Company	Total Complaints Served
L.D. Services (Michigan)*	1,670
Trans National (Business Discount Plan)	1,090
American Business Alliance (acquired by Tel-Save)	967
L.D. Services (Virginia) -- a Fletcher Company	866
Heartline Communications, Inc.*	623
Minimum Rate Pricing, Inc.	600
L.D. Services, Inc.	370
Integrated Tele Services	230
Nationwide Telecom, Inc.	182
Future Telephone Communications, LTD.	160
Discount Network Services	130
Network Utilization Services	130
Corporate Services	101
Least Cost Routing, Inc.	92
Telec, Inc.	90
Switched Services Communications	78
Amer-I-Net Services	72
Building Futures in Communications	70

* The FCC has been advised that these companies filed for bankruptcy.

Some of the companies listed in Appendix C should have filed the worksheets, but had not done so by May 11, 1998. Accordingly, the FCC is reviewing this matter. Any carriers found to be in violation of the FCC’s rules will be subject to appropriate sanctions.

Figure 7 shows the 18 companies in the “Other Companies” category that were served more than 50 complaints in 1997.

If the companies listed in Figure 7 are carriers -- and if their consumer toll revenues were greater than \$2 million -- they should have filed USF Worksheets.

If the consumer toll revenues for these companies are \$2 million or less, their slamming complaint indices

Note: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

would be extremely high -- ranging from 35 to 835 complaints per million dollars of revenue.

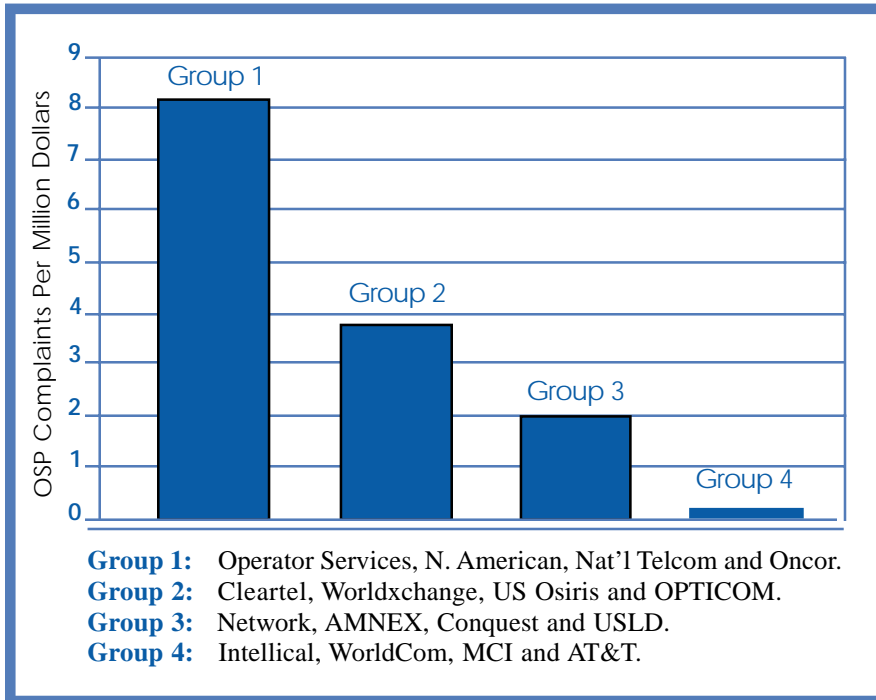
These complaint indices are much higher than the highest slamming complaint index (18.1) listed in Appendix C.

Appendix C lists under the “Billing Agents” category the two billing agents that were served more than 50 slamming complaints in 1997.

Complaint Indices For Companies Served More Than 25 Operator Service Provider (OSP) Complaints

During 1997, the third highest category of consumer complaints and inquiries processed by the Consumer Protection Branch was interstate operator service providers' rates and practices.

Figure 8
OSP Complaint Indices



OSPs provide long distance -- and in some cases local telephone service -- from pay telephones or other types of telephones located in public places such as hotels, motels and hospitals.

The first section of this Scorecard provides in-depth information about the actions the FCC has taken to protect consumers from the high rates charged by some OSPs.

During 1997, the Branch processed 2,262 interstate OSP complaints and inquiries. This figure represents approximately 5 percent of the total number of

Note 1: The OSP complaint indices are based on OSP revenues.

Note 2: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

complaints and inquiries processed by the Branch during this time period.

Figure 8 shows the complaint indices for the 16 companies that were served more than 25 OSP complaints during 1997, and that filed Universal Service Fund worksheets by May 11, 1998. The group complaint indices for these companies range from 8.2 to less than 0.5 complaints per million dollars of OSP revenues.

The four OSP companies with the lowest and best complaint index are listed in [Group 12](#). The 12 OSP companies with the highest complaint indices are listed in [Groups 1, 2 and 3](#).

[Appendix D](#) to this Scorecard lists for each company included in Figure 6 the total number of OSP complaints served, group OSP revenue data and the group index. Appendix D also lists the three "Billing Agents" and three "Other Companies" that were served more than 25 OSP complaints.

Complaints Served on Local Telephone Companies

Many consumers first contact their local telephone company to resolve their complaints before sending a written complaint to the FCC. If the local telephone company successfully resolves a complaint, it may not be necessary for consumers to file a complaint with the FCC.

Figure 9 shows the local telephone companies that were served more than 50 complaints during 1997.

Figure 9 also shows, for each company, a slamming complaint index and a complaint index for complaints involving issues other than slamming.

Appendix A to this Scorecard lists for each company included in Figure 9 the total number of complaints served regarding all types of telephone-related issues (in-

cluding slamming), revenue data and a complaint index based on the total number of complaints served.

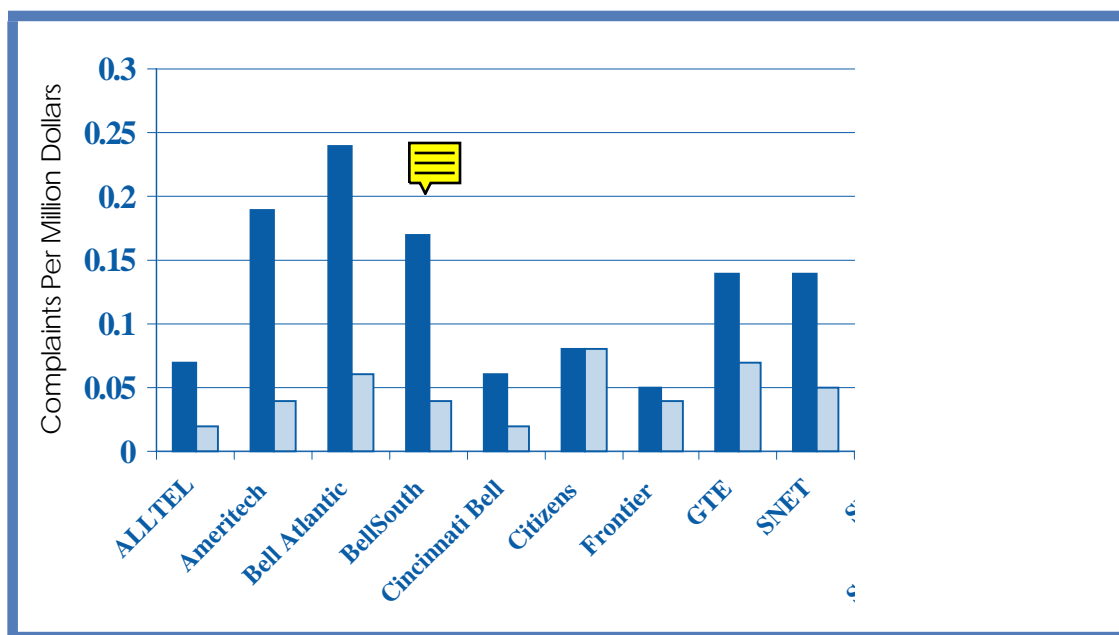
Slamming complaints involving long distance and other types of companies are served on local telephone companies because the local telephone companies have in their records information essential to resolving slamming complaints.

A local telephone company may also be served with complaints

about services provided directly to consumers by the local company or services involving other companies.

For example, a local company may be served with a complaint because it issued a bill for disputed long distance calls on behalf of the long distance company that transmitted the calls. In this case, the local telephone company is served because it has entered into a contractual arrangement to render bills for such calls.

Figure 9
Local
Telephone
Company
Complaint
Indices



Note: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

■ Slamming Complaints Served ■ Non-slamming Complaints Served

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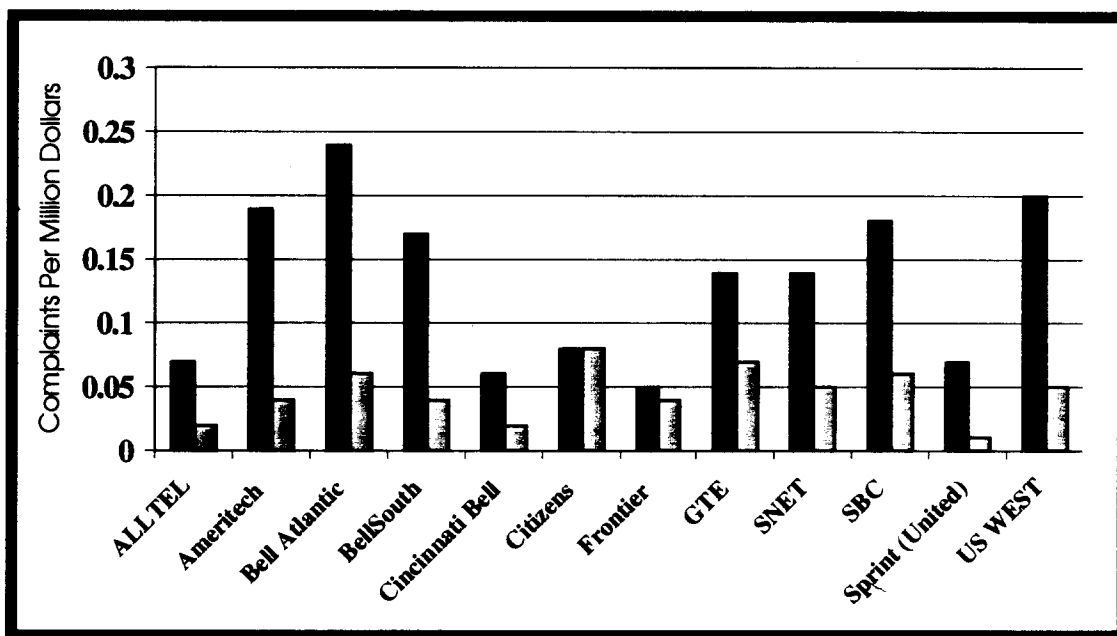
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Figure 9
Local
Telephone
Company
Complaint
Indices



Note: Service of a complaint does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing by the served company.

■ Slamming Complaints Served ■ Non-slamming Complaints Served

Description of Appendices

Appendix A All Types of Telephone- Related Complaints

Appendix A lists the 108 companies served more than 50 complaints during 1997. The total number of complaints served on each company is based on information contained in the Consumer Protection Branch's consumer complaints databases.

Long Distance Telephone Companies

There were 50 long distance companies served more than 50 complaints, and that filed Universal Service Fund (USF) worksheets by May 11, 1998.

For each of these companies, a complaint index was calculated by dividing the number of complaints served on that company by the amount of telecommunications-related revenue it reported (measured in millions of dollars). The carriers were then ranked in the order of declining complaint indices.

The revenue figures contained in the USF worksheets are confidential, so the revenue figures could not be reported -- nor can the individual company complaint indexes be released. The companies were therefore organized into groups of four or more, in order to maintain confidentiality. A combined complaint index for each group was calculated by dividing the sum of their complaints by the sum of their revenues.

The USF filings were due on March 31, 1998. Not all telecommunications companies had filed the form as of that time. Revenue information was used to calculate complaint indexes if the carrier filed its USF worksheet before May 11, 1998.

Local Telephone Companies

For each of the 12 local telephone companies served more than 50 complaints during 1997, a complaint index was calculated by dividing the number of complaints served on that company by the amount of its revenue from regulated services (measured in millions of dollars).

Revenue data for the Regional Bell Operating Companies are available from the *Preliminary Statistics of Communications Common Car-*

riers, released May 29, 1998. Revenues for the other local telephone companies are from their annual reports.

Billing Agents

Some companies do not bill their customers directly, but rely on other companies known as “billing agents.” Billing agents sub-contract with the local telephone companies to arrange billing and collection for services rendered. Because of the nature of their business, billing agents are not required to file revenue information with the FCC.

Ten billing agents were served more than 50 complaints in 1997. Each was asked to provide its calendar year 1997 billing revenues so a complaint index could be calculated. Crown Communications, Long Distance Billing Company, Inc., Telephone Billing Service, Federal TransTel, Inc. and American Telnet, Inc. declined to do so.

Other Companies

Companies that are not carriers, or carriers that have very low telecommunications revenues, are not required to file Universal Service Fund worksheets.

Some of the 36 companies listed under this category should have filed the worksheets, but had not done so by May 11, 1998. Accordingly, the FCC is reviewing this matter. Any carriers found to be in violation of the FCC’s rules will be subject to appropriate sanctions.

Since no USF revenue figures were available for these companies, it is not possible to calculate their complaint indices.

Appendix B Complaints Served on Long Distance Telephone Companies with Publicly Disclosed Revenue

Appendix B lists the 19 long distance telephone companies served more than 50 complaints, and that had publicly disclosed revenue figures. Because of differences in accounting methods, the publicly available revenue figures do not necessarily match the revenue figures reported in the Universal Service Fund worksheets.

The complaint index is calculated by taking the number of complaints served on that company during 1997, and dividing it by the amount of its long distance revenue (in millions).

Appendix C

Slamming Complaints

Appendix C lists the 61 companies served more than 50 slamming complaints during 1997.

Long Distance Telephone Companies

There were 31 long distance companies served more than 50 slamming complaints, and that filed Universal Service Fund (USF) worksheets by May 11, 1998.

A complaint index was calculated for each company by dividing the number of slamming complaints served on that company by the amount of the consumer toll revenue it reported (measured in millions of dollars) on its USF form. The carriers were then ranked in the order of declining complaint indices.

The carriers were organized into groups of four or more, in order to maintain confidentiality of their toll revenues. A combined complaint index for each group was calculated by dividing the sum of their complaints by the sum of their revenues.

Local Telephone Companies

For each of the 10 local telephone companies served more than 50 slamming complaints during 1997, a complaint index was calculated by dividing the number of slamming complaints served on that company by the amount of its revenue from regulated services (measured in millions of dollars).

Billing Agents

Two billing agents received more than 50 slamming complaints in 1997. Because we do not have toll-revenue figures for these companies, a complaint index could not be calculated.

Other Companies

There were 18 companies served more than 50 slamming complaints that did not file Universal Service fund worksheets before May 11, 1998. These companies were listed in order of descending complaints.

Appendix D Operator Service Provider (OSP) Complaints

Appendix D lists the 22 companies served more than 25 OSP complaints during 1997.

Long Distance Telephone Companies

There were 16 long distance telephone companies served more than 25 OSP complaints during 1997, and that filed Universal Service Fund (USF) worksheets by May 11, 1998. A complaint index was calculated by dividing the number of OSP complaints served on that company by the amount of the OSP revenue it reported (measured in millions of dollars) on its USF form. The companies were then ranked in the order of declining complaint indices.

The companies were organized into groups of four in order to maintain confidentiality of their OSP revenues. A combined complaint index for each group was calculated by dividing the sum of their complaints by the sum of their revenues.

Billing Agents

Three billing agents received more than 25 OSP complaints in 1997. Because we do not have OSP revenue figures for these companies, a complaint index could not be calculated.

Other Companies

There were three companies served more than 25 OSP complaints that did not file Universal Service fund worksheets before May 11, 1998. These companies were listed in order of descending OSP complaints.

Statistical Data Included in This Scorecard Report

Questions about the revenue figures or the complaint indices listed within the Scorecard appendices should be directed to the Industry Analysis Division at (202) 418-0940.

Questions about the number of complaints served on each company should be directed to the FOIA/Information Team of the Consumer Protection Branch. The team can be reached by dialing the Branch's Consumer Hotline at (202) 632-7553. After reaching the Consumer Hotline, callers should leave a message in menu selection 8. The message should include the caller's name, telephone number, and a description of the requested information.

Companies Served More Than 50 Complaints in 1997

Long Distance Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index	Complaints Served	Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Pilgrim Telephone, Inc.	263		
Home Owners Long Distance, Inc.	192		
Axces Telecommunications, Inc.	316		
Group Long Distance, Inc.	298		
Group 1 Totals and Index	1,069	43	24.9
Brittan Communications, Inc.	485		
LDM Systems, Inc.	530		
LDC Telecommunications, Inc.	257		
Preferred Carrier Services, Inc.	148		
Group 2 Totals and Index	1,420	79	17.9
WinStar Gateway Network, Inc. (long distance operations)	224		
QCC, Inc.	180		
Network Operator Services, Inc.	199		
North American Communications, Inc.	134		
Group 3 Totals and Index	737	61	12.1
Operator Communications, Inc. (Oncor)	494		
EqualNet Corporation	345		
National Telecom, USA, Inc.	136		
The Furst Group	543		
Group 4 Totals and Index	1,518	167	9.1
Coast International, Inc.	86		
Atlas Communications, Ltd.	273		
American Network Exchange, Inc. (AMNEX)	435		
Clartel Communications, Inc.	129		
Group 5 Totals and Index	923	147	6.3
Operator Services Company	119		
RRV Enterprises, Inc. (Consumer Access)	162		
One Call Communications, Inc. (OPTICOM)	500		
North American Telephone Network	97		
Group 6 Totals and Index	878	202	4.4
Intellicall Operator Services, Inc.	121		
National Accounts Long Distance, Inc.	156		
Matrix Telecom, Inc.	115		
Coastal Telephone Company	120		
Group 7 Totals and Index	512	214	2.4

Companies Served More Than 50 Complaints in 1997

Long Distance Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index (Continued)	Complaints Served	Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Communication TeleSystems International (Worldxchange)	409		
Touch 1 Long Distance, Inc.	97		
National Telephone & Communications, Inc.	160		
Conquest Operator Services Corp.	55		
Group 8 Totals and Index	721	438	1.6
USLD Communications Corp.	309		
GE Exchange	53		
Midcom Communications, Inc.	60		
Telco Communications Group, Inc.	370		
Group 9 Totals and Index	792	812	1.0
NOS Communications, Inc.	73		
Frontier Corporation (long distance operations)	752		
IXC Long Distance, Inc.	65		
EXCEL Communications, Inc.	613		
Group 10 Totals and Index	1,503	2,799	0.5
Unidial Incorporated	61		
Tel-Save, Inc.	125		
LCI International, Inc.	571		
Sprint Corporation (long distance operations)	2,065		
Cherry Communications, Inc. ¹	88		
Group 11 Totals and Index	2,910	9,274	0.3
MCI Communications Corporation	4,364		
WorldCom, Inc.	1,241		
VarTec Telecom, Inc.	189		
AT&T Corp.	5,858		
Cable & Wireless PLC	77		
Group 12 Totals and Index	11,729	65,367	0.2
Totals and Index: All Groups	24,712	79,603	0.3

Groups 1 through 12 above include only those companies that filed Universal Service Forms.

Note 1: The FCC has been advised that this company filed for bankruptcy.

Companies Served More Than 50 Complaints in 1997

Local Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index	Complaints Served	Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Bell Atlantic	7,588	24,936	0.30
U S WEST	2,504	10,022	0.25
SBC	4,590	18,756	0.24
Ameritech	2,645	11,775	0.22
GTE ²	2,952	13,537	0.22
BellSouth	3,090	14,666	0.21
SNET ²	282	1,480	0.19
Citizens Utilities Company ²	136	860	0.16
Frontier Communications ²	64	667	0.10
ALLTEL ²	112	1,269	0.09
Cincinnati Bell ²	55	670	0.08
Sprint Corporation (United) ²	424	5,290	0.08

Billing Agents Ranked by Complaints

Billing Concepts Corp.	6,059	2,011	3.0
OAN Services, Inc.	3,477	827	4.2
Integretel	1,522	390	3.9
International Telemedia Associates	953	124	7.7
HOLD Billing Services	553	127	4.4
Telephone Billing Service	338		
Long Distance Billing Company, Inc.	237		
Crown Communications	121		
American Telnet, Inc.	112		
Federal TransTel, Inc. ³	75		

Note 2: Excludes long distance revenues.

Note 3: Federal TransTel is also a long distance telephone company, and did not file its USF form by May 11, 1998.

Companies Served More Than 50 Complaints in 1997

Other Companies Ranked by Complaints	Complaints Served
Long Distance Services, Inc. (Michigan) ⁴	1,688
Trans National Telephone (Business Discount Plan)	1,182
American Business Alliance. ⁵	1,119
Long Distance Services (Virginia) -- a Fletcher Company	963
Minimum Rate Pricing, Inc.	812
Heartline Communications, Inc. ⁴	623
L.D. Services, Inc.	420
Network Access, Inc.	275
Integrated Tele Services	256
Inovate Telecom, Inc.	247
Future Telephone Communications, LTD.	241
Nationwide Telecom, Inc.	199
US Teleconnect	162
Network Utilization Services	151
Discount Network Services	143
Least Cost Routing, Inc.	130
Corporate Services	125
VIP Telephone Network, Inc.	115
HSS Vending	100
America's Tele-Network	99
Telec, Inc.	92
Amer-I-Net Services	82
Switched Services Communications	78
Building Futures in Communications	72
Direct American Marketers	72
Lifeline	72
Pantel Communications, Inc.	72
US Telephone	72
Polar Communications Corp.	64
International Telecommunications Corp.	60
Nationwide Long Distance, Inc. ⁴	60
Psychic Discovery Network	60
ASC Telecom, Inc.	56
Branstock Communications, Inc.	55
Long Distance Network	54
Teltrust, Inc.	52

Note 4: The FCC has been advised that these companies filed for bankruptcy.

Note 5: American Business Alliance was acquired by Tel-Save, Inc.

Long Distance Companies Served More Than 50 Complaints in 1997 (Which Have Publicly Disclosed Revenues)

Company	Complaints Served	Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
WinStar Gateway Network, Inc. (long distance operations)	224	16	14.4
EqualNet Corporation	345	36	9.6
Group Long Distance, Inc.	298	48	6.2
OPTICOM (One Call Communications, Inc.)	500	118	4.2
American Network Exchange, Inc. (AMNEX)	435	116	3.7
USLD Communications Corp.	309	241	1.3
Communication TeleSystems International (Worldxchange)	409	345	1.2
Telco Communications Group, Inc.	370	555	0.7
LCI International, Inc.	571	1,001	0.6
Frontier Corporation (long distance operations)	752	1,322	0.6
EXCEL Communications, Inc.	613	1,180	0.5
Cherry Communications, Inc.	88	180	0.5
Tel-Save, Inc.	125	305	0.4
MCI Communications Corporation	4,364	17,150	0.3
Sprint Corporation (long distance operations)	2,065	8,595	0.2
VarTec Telecom, Inc.	189	820	0.2
WorldCom, Inc.	1,241	5,897	0.2
AT&T Corp.	5,858	39,470	0.1
Cable & Wireless PLC	77	1,066	0.1

Companies Served More Than 50 Slamming Complaints in 1997

Long Distance Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index	Slamming Complaints Served	Toll Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Axces Telecommunications, Inc.	178		
Home Owners Long Distance, Inc.	139		
Atlas Communications, Ltd.	237		
Brittan Communications, Inc.	443		
Group 1 Totals and Index	997	55	18.1
LDM Systems, Inc.	489		
Group Long Distance, Inc.	214		
Preferred Carrier Services, Inc.	128		
LDC Telecommunications, Inc.	214		
Group 2 Totals and Index	1,045	67	15.6
WinStar Gateway Network, Inc. (long distance operations)	196		
QCC, Inc.	153		
Coast International, Inc.	78		
EqualNet Corporation	262		
Group 3 Totals and Index	689	76	9.1
The Furst Group	438		
National Accounts Long Distance, Inc.	121		
North American Telephone Network	54		
Matrix Telecom, Inc.	84		
Group 4 Totals and Index	697	168	4.2
National Telephone & Communications, Inc.	143		
Coastal Telephone Company	93		
Touch 1 Long Distance, Inc.	63		
USLD Communications Corp.	183		
IXC Long Distance, Inc.	54		
Group 5 Totals and Index	536	507	1.1
Unidial Incorporated	52		
Tel-Save, Inc.	65		
EXCEL Communications, Inc.	333		
LCI International, Inc.	384		
Telco Communications Group, Inc.	97		
Group 6 Totals and Index	931	3,253	0.3

Companies Served More Than 50 Slamming Complaints in 1997

Long Distance Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index (continued)	Slamming Complaints Served	Toll Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Sprint Corporation (long distance operations)	1,136		
Frontier Corporation (long distance operations)	218		
WorldCom, Inc.	541		
MCI Communications Corporation	1,299		
AT&T Corp.	2,199		
Group 7 Totals and Index	5,393	61,582	0.1
Totals and Index: All Groups	24,712	79,603	0.3

Groups 1-7 listed above include only those companies that filed Universal Service Forms.

Local Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index	Slamming Complaints Served	Regulated Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Holding Company			
Bell Atlantic	6,105	24,936	0.24
U S WEST	2,042	10,022	0.20
Ameritech	2,182	11,775	0.19
SBC	3,436	18,756	0.18
BellSouth	2,510	14,666	0.17
GTE ¹	1,962	13,537	0.14
SNET ¹	210	1,480	0.14
Citizens Utilities Company ¹	66	860	0.08
Sprint Corporation (United) ¹	355	5,290	0.07
ALLTEL ¹	84	1,269	0.07

Note 1: Excludes long distance revenue.

Companies Served More Than 50 Slamming Complaints in 1997

Billing Agents Ranked by Complaints	Slamming Complaints Served
Billing Concepts Corp.	3,298
Long Distance Billing Company, Inc.	202
Other Companies Ranked by Complaints	
Long Distance Services, Inc. (Michigan) ²	1,670
Trans National Telephone (Business Discount Plan)	1,090
American Business Alliance ³	967
Long Distance Services (Virginia) -- a Fletcher Company	866
Heartline Communications, Inc. ²	623
Minimum Rate Pricing, Inc.	600
L.D. Services, Inc.	370
Integrated Tele Services	230
Future Telephone Communications, LTD.	160
Nationwide Telecom, Inc.	182
Discount Network Services	130
Network Utilization Services	130
Corporate Services	101
Least Cost Routing, Inc.	92
Telec, Inc.	90
Switched Services Communications	78
Amer-I-Net Services	72
Building Futures in Communications	70

Note 2: The FCC has been advised that these companies filed for bankruptcy.

Note 3: American Business Alliance was acquired by Tel-Save, Inc.

Companies Served More Than 25 OSP Complaints in 1997

Long Distance Telephone Companies Ranked by Complaint Index	OSP Complaints Served	OSP Revenue (Millions)	Complaint Index
Operator Services Company	28		
North American Communications, Inc.	72		
National Telecom, USA, Inc.	117		
Operator Communications, Inc. (Oncor)	364		
Group 1 Totals and Index	581	71	8.2
Clartel Communications, Inc.	99		
Communication TeleSystems International (Worldxchange)	102		
US Osiris Corporation	29		
One Call Communications, Inc. (OPTICOM)	413		
Group 2 Totals and Index	643	171	3.8
Network Operator Services, Inc.	50		
American Network Exchange, Inc. (AMNEX)	150		
Conquest Operator Services Corp.	44		
USLD Communications Corp.	78		
Group 3 Totals and Index	322	164	2.0
Intellicall Operator Services, Inc.	32		
WorldCom, Inc.	105		
MCI Communications Corporation	55		
AT&T Corp.	63		
Group 4 Totals and Index	255	7,024	*1
Totals and Index: All Groups	1,801	7,430	0.2

Groups 1-4 listed above include only those companies that filed Universal Service Forms.

Note 1: Less than .05 complaints per million dollars of OSP revenue.

Billing Agents Ranked by Complaints

Billing Concepts Corp.	1,041
OAN Services, Inc.	502
Integretel	78

Other Companies Ranked by Complaints

Polar Communications Corp.	56
ASC Telecom, Inc.	42
Teltrust, Inc.	26

Guide

to Abbreviations of Company
Names Used in Scorecard
Appendices, Charts
and Graphs

Abbr.	Company
ALLTEL	ALLTEL Corporation
AMNEX	American Network Exchange, Inc.
Ameritech	Ameritech Corporation
Atlas	Atlas Communications, Ltd.
Axces	Axces Telecommunications, Inc.
AT&T	AT&T Corp.
Bell Atlantic	Bell Atlantic Corporation
BellSouth	BellSouth Corporation
Brittan	Brittan Communications, Inc.
Cable & Wireless	Cable & Wireless PLC
Cincinnati Bell	Cincinnati Bell, Inc.
Citizens	Citizens Utilities Company
Cleartel	Cleartel Communications
Coast International	Coast International, Inc.
Coastal Telephone Company	Coastal Telecom Limited Company
Conquest	Conquest Operator Services Corp.
EqualNet	EqualNet Corporation
Frontier	Frontier Corporation
GE Exchange	GE Capital Communication Services Corp.
Group L. D.	Group Long Distance, Inc.
GTE	GTE Corporation
Home Owners	Home Owners Long Distance, Inc.
Intellicall	Intellicall Operator Services, Inc.
LDC	LDC Telecommunications, Inc.
LDM	LDM Systems, Inc.
L.D. Services (Michigan)	Long Distance Services, Inc. (Michigan)
L.D. Services (Virginia)	Long Distance Services (Virginia) -- a Fletcher Company

Guide

to Abbreviations of Company
Names Used in Scorecard
Appendices, Charts
and Graphs
(Continued)

Abbr.	Company
MCI	MCI Communications Corporation
Nat'l Telecom Network	National Telecom, USA, Inc. Network Operator Services, Inc.
N. American	North American Communications, Inc.
Oncor	Operator Communications, Inc.
Operator Services	Operator Services Company
OPTICOM	One Call Communications, Inc.
Pilgrim	Pilgrim Telephone, Inc.
Preferred Carrier	Preferred Carrier Services, Inc.
QCC	QCC, Inc.
SBC	SBC Communications, Inc.
SNET	Southern New England Telecommunications Corp.
Sprint	Sprint Corporation
Sprint (United)	Sprint Corporation
Tel-Save	Tel-Save, Inc.
Trans National (Business Discount Plan)	Trans National Telephone (Business Discount Plan)
USLD	USLD Communications Corp.
US Osiris	US Osiris Corporation
U S WEST	U S WEST, Inc.
VarTec	VarTec Telecom, Inc.
WinStar	WinStar Gateway Network, Inc.
WorldCom	WorldCom, Inc.
Worldxchange	Communications TeleSystems International



Check Out *our consumer information on telephone-related issues*

- How to file a complaint with the FCC regarding telephone-related issues.*
- Away-from-home calls. Hang up on high public telephone rates.*
- Cramming. Unauthorized, misleading or deceptive charges placed on consumers' telephone bills.*
- Slamming. Any practice that changes a telephone subscriber's preferred telephone company without the subscriber's knowledge or consent.*
- 900 number pay-per-call and other types of telephone information services.*
- Unsolicited telephone marketing calls and faxes.*
- The FCC's interstate access charge system.*
- The FCC's universal service support mechanisms.*
- Taxes and other charges on your telephone bill.*
- Telephone toll fraud.*
- Recording telephone conversations.*
- Calls made from payphones.*

The above consumer information is available through:

The Internet:

Browse and download the consumer information listed above from the World Wide Web at:
http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/consumer_news/

Fax-on-Demand:

Dial (202) 418-2830. From the main menu select the indices option. Then select the fact sheet option for a list of fact sheets and document numbers.

Calling the following FCC telephone numbers:

National Call Center toll-free at 1-888-225-5322.

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTY) toll-free at 1-888-835-5322.

Office of Public Affairs, Public Service Division, at (202) 418-0200.

Consumer Hotline of the Enforcement Division, Common Carrier Bureau, at (202) 632-7553.

Information About Local And Long Distance Telephone Companies

Check out the FCC-State Link Homepage at:

<http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/stats>

Tips That Can Save You Money

Stay On Top



Of Your Telephone Charges

- ✓ Carefully read all forms and promotional materials, including the fine print, before signing up for telephone services.
- ✓ Telephone companies compete for your telephone business. Use your buying power wisely and shop around.
- ✓ Ask each company you contact to explain any discount calling plans it provides to consumers.

Be sure to ask about any restrictions that apply to discount calling plans so that you can determine whether the plan will save you money. Also, be sure to ask the company if it charges its customers minimum monthly charges or other types of monthly charges.

If you think that a company's charges are too high or that its services do not meet your needs, contact other companies and try to get a better deal.
- ✓ Carefully review your telephone bill every month.

Look for company names you do not recognize, charges for calls you did not make, and charges for services you did not authorize.
- ✓ Immediately call any company that charged you for calls you did not make or services you did not authorize.

Ask the company to explain the charges and request a billing adjustment for incorrect charges.

The name of the company and the telephone number to call about billing questions should be included with your telephone bill. This information is often at the top of the pages listing the charges for each company.
- ✓ If the company responsible for the charges does not sufficiently respond to your concerns, ask your local telephone company or the billing company what the procedure is for removing incorrect charges from your bill.

Remember

To Collect the Following Information About Problems with Your Telephone Service and to Take Notes



- The date(s) of the incidents involved with the complaint.
- The names and addresses of all the companies involved with the complaint.
- The names and telephone numbers of the company employees you talked with in an effort to resolve the complaint, and the dates you spoke with them.
- Copies of the telephone bills listing the disputed charges. The disputed charges should be circled on the copies of the bills.
- Copies of correspondence received from the companies involved with the complaint and from state or federal agencies you contacted in an effort to resolve the complaint.
- Copies of other documents involved with the complaint.
- For complaints about operator service providers, you should collect the information listed on page 9 in the How to File Complaints section of this Scorecard.

Consumer Notes

