

# AVOID BILL SURPRISES

At the FCC, we receive tens of thousands of consumer complaints about phone bills each year. Many consumers say they occasionally encounter a monthly bill that is substantially higher than they expected. To avoid surprises, we suggest getting a better understanding of your bill and following a few tips.

Total payment due to telephone company for this billing cycle

Several common fees such as 911 charges, text messaging and download fees are under the discretion of your provider

Taxes imposed by state, local, and municipal governments on goods and services, which may also appear as "gross receipts" taxes on your bill

☎
**PHONE COMPANY NAME**

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY**

Amount of Last Bill.....\$24.55  
 Payment(s) Thank You.....\$24.55  
 Balance.....\$0.00

**CURRENT CHARGES**

Local Monthly Charges.....\$36.95  
 Long Distance Service Charges.....\$9.93  
**TOTAL DUE BY 00/00/0000 \$46.88**

**Call 1-888-555-5555 for customer service**

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Recurring Charges

**Local Telephone Service.....\$18.00**  
**FCC Recovery Fee.....\$0.50**  
 Charge for Network Access.....\$6.50  
 Voice Mail.....\$4.00  
 Universal Connectivity Fee.....\$0.50  
 Local Number Portability.....\$0.30  
 Emergency 911.....\$1.00  
**Federal Excise Tax.....\$2.25**  
 Utility User Tax, City.....\$0.50  
**State & Local Taxes.....\$2.50**  
 Total Balance Due.....\$36.05

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Your Long Distance Telephone Company

Domestic Discount.....\$0.46  
 Carrier Universal Service Charge.....\$0.85  
 Single Bill Fee.....\$1.50  
 Total Long Distance Monthly Charges..\$2.23

Toll-free number from the service provider for bill questions and complaints

Certain fees such as the "FCC Recovery Fee" are not taxes or other government fees, but instead are the provider's own charges described in ways that look official, which may be misleading and unlawful

This 3 percent tax applies only to local service, which is billed separately from long distance service

## CONSUMER TIPS



Scan your bill line by line to better understand the charges.



Ask your provider for a sample itemized bill when starting or changing services. Providers may also have online resources that explain a bill line by line.



Reach out to your provider with any questions you have.



Compare different service providers to get the most for your money.



Visit the FCC Consumer Help Center to learn more about billing [fcc.gov/consumers](http://fcc.gov/consumers)

The FCC is here to help. If you have addressed a billing issue with your provider and are not satisfied with the response, you can file a complaint with the FCC at [consumercomplaints.fcc.gov](http://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov).