



Mexico Collect Call Scam

If you receive a collect phone call from someone in Mexico, it may be part of a telephone scam that predominantly targets people in Hispanic communities, or with Spanish surnames. Consumers have complained to the FCC that they have been deceived into accepting collect calls they believe are from family members in Mexico. In multiple cases, consumers have been fraudulently billed large amounts of money for calls from strangers or bogus calls that were never connected.

How the scam works

An operator calls your residential telephone number and tells you he or she has a collect call from a family member who has an emergency or an important message. The operator may have some personal information – such as your family’s last name or husband or wife’s name – and may even give the name of the calling “family member.”

If you accept the operator-assisted call, you’ll be connected to a complete stranger who gives information that is not related to your family. Even if you immediately hang up, you will still be billed for the call.

In some cases, an operator automatically puts the call through without waiting for you to accept the charge. Other times, even if you decline the call, you may still be charged a very high rate for a collect call that was never accepted.

What you can do

- Ask the operator to have the person placing the collect call speak their name so that their voice might be recognized, instead of allowing the operator to say the name of the person placing the collect call.
- Use caller ID to screen calls from unidentified numbers. Be cautious even if a number appears authentic: it may be a “spoofed” number with deliberately falsified caller ID information. (See our consumer guide on Caller ID and Spoofing: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/spoofing-and-caller-id.) Avoid answering any calls you suspect may be spoofed.
- Carefully examine your monthly telephone bills for accuracy, and report any erroneous charges to your billing company.

Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau



Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Filing a Complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

If you feel that you are a victim of an international phone scam, you can file a complaint with the FTC online at <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>.

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

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