Local, Local Toll and Long Distance Calling

When it comes to telephone service, the range of options and offers out there can be confusing. Here is a guide to some common terms used to describe the different types of telephone service.

Types of Service

- **Local Exchange Service** provides calling within your exchange. An exchange is a specified area usually encompassing a city, town or village and its environs.

- **Local Toll (intraLATA) Service** (also called local long distance or regional toll service) provides calling within a geographic area known as a Local Access and Transport Area (LATA). Per-minute toll charges usually apply to these calls.

  Local toll calls may be made within your area code or to a different area code across town, in the next county or, in some cases, an adjoining state. You must dial “1” before making a local toll call, even if the area code is the same as yours. These calls can be carried by your local exchange telephone company or your long distance company.

  Some local telephone companies offer an optional bundle of local exchange and local toll service for a single monthly fee.

- **Expanded Local Exchange Service** extends a local exchange calling area and eliminates local toll costs. However, you may see expanded local exchange service as a surcharge on your telephone bill.

  The aforementioned services usually cover calls within a state, and are usually regulated by your state public service commission. If you have a problem regarding these services, you can find contact information for your state’s commission at [www.naruc.org/about-naruc/regulatory-commissions/](http://www.naruc.org/about-naruc/regulatory-commissions/). You may also contact your state consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, or state attorney general’s office to learn about protections and remedies available to you as a consumer. You can also find contact information for these organizations in the blue pages or government section of your local telephone directory.

- **Long Distance Toll (interLATA) Service** includes all calls outside the local exchange and local toll service areas, calls that originate in one LATA and terminate in another, and international calls. Long-distance toll calls can be between two LATAs in the same state, such as a call from San Diego to San Francisco, or between LATAs in different states. Long-distance toll service includes international service (except in Hawaii where international service is separate from long distance service). When purchasing long-distance toll service, remember to ask whether international calls are included in monthly long-distance calling plans.

Equal Access

Equal access allows telephone subscribers to choose an authorized telephone company or companies to handle their local toll and long-distance toll calls (including international) from their wireline telephones.
Where equal access is available:

- Subscribers may choose separate authorized telephone companies for each of these services or one authorized telephone company for both of them. Subscribers can place local toll and long distance toll calls using their authorized telephone company or companies by dialing 1 (or 011 for international calls) plus the appropriate code and telephone number (referred to as dialing parity).

- Subscribers can place calls using other telephone companies by dialing a 1010XXX access code. A 1010XXX access code represents the carrier access code (CAC) format. Three-digit carrier identification codes (CICs) were expanded to four digits by adding an initial zero (0) so that "XXX" becomes "0XXX." The CAC format for carriers who hold a three-digit CIC is the same seven-digit format: "101-XXXX." Because the four-digit CIC of carriers that hold a three-digit CIC will start with a zero, some of those carriers may choose to advertise the seven-digit CAC as "10-10-XXX" because they believe it will be easier for their customers to remember that format. There is no difference between "101-XXXX" and "10-10-XXX."

- Subscribers can change their authorized telephone company or companies at any time, but may be charged for doing so.

If you were a subscriber to a separate long-distance carrier (i.e., a different long-distance services provider than your local telephone company) prior to Dec. 28, 2015, you retained equal access and dialing parity for your existing long-distance service. However, as of Dec. 28, 2015, local telephone companies were no longer required to provide equal access and dialing parity for long-distance services to new customers. Wireline telephone companies still must provide equal access and dialing parity for local toll calls. Wireless telephone companies are not required to provide equal access, and generally choose an authorized telephone company for their subscribers. If wireless companies allow use of "dial-around" 1010XXX access codes, they can choose to charge their customers a fee for doing so.

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  
  445 12th Street, S.W.  
  Washington, DC 20554

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