



## Regulation of Cable TV Rates

Your local franchising authority - the city, county or other governmental organization authorized by your state to regulate cable television service - legally may (but is not required to) regulate the rate your cable TV provider can charge for "basic" cable service. The rates you pay for other cable programming and services, such as expanded cable channel packages, premium movie channels and pay-per-view sports events, are set by your cable TV provider.

### Basic tier service

Cable systems generally are required to offer a "basic tier" of programming which must be included for all subscribers before they purchase any additional programming. The basic service tier must include most local broadcast stations, as well as the public, educational and governmental channels required by the franchise agreement between the LFA and your cable company.

In general, LFAs may review any increases in basic service tier rates to verify that they accurately reflect increases in the cable company's programming or other costs that cable operators are allowed to pass through to customers. Your LFA also is authorized to enforce FCC rules and guidelines in the following areas:

- **Customer service:** complaints about bills, or a cable operator's response to inquiries about signal quality or service requests
- **Franchise fees,** which the cable company pays the LFA for the right to access public rights of way to offer cable service

### Additional service tiers

The rates for any tier of service beyond the basic services tier, including pay-per-channel programming (i.e., a premium movie channel) and pay-per-program services (i.e., a pay-per-view sports event), are not regulated. Your cable company determines the rates charged for these services. However, your cable company may not require you to purchase any additional service tier other than the basic service tier in order to have access to pay-per-view events or premium channels offered on an "a la carte" or individual basis. There is no law that requires (or prohibits) cable companies to offer channels or programs on an "a la carte" basis.

### Complaints or Questions

You may contact your cable provider or your LFA with complaints or questions about customer service, basic service tier rates or franchise fees. The name of your LFA is printed on your cable bill and in your local telephone book.

Contact your cable company with any complaints about rates for tiers of service other than the basic service tier and for any pay-per-channel programming and pay-per-program services, because these rates are not subject to regulation.



You also can contact your local and state consumer protection organizations for assistance in understanding your rights and responsibilities as a cable subscriber.

### **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

### **Accessible formats**

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number above, or send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov).

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