

Calling Areas and Rates

Before you dial, know what the call will cost



Local calling

Calls from landline phones are billed according to whether they are a local, extended area service (EAS), extended community calling (ECC), local toll, or long distance call.

Local Service

Telephone service areas, commonly referred to as exchanges, determine what telephone numbers can be assigned to a particular address and define the local, EAS and ECC calling areas. Your exchange is usually associated with the municipality that you live in or near. For example, if you live in Oshkosh, you are probably served by the Oshkosh exchange. However, because exchange boundaries are determined by the distribution of the telephone company's facilities, they do not necessarily coincide with school districts, political boundaries or postal delivery areas.

How are local calls charged?

Many companies charge a flat monthly rate for local service, regardless of how many local calls you make or the length of your phone calls. Other companies charge a combination of a flat monthly rate and a charge per call. Some companies have both rate plans available.

Extended Area Service

Extended Area Service (EAS) is a type of local service provided by your telephone company for calls made between neighboring exchanges. Depending on your telephone company, EAS calling may be included in the price of your basic local service or it may be offered as an optional service with separate charges. Customers may have the choice of selecting a measured option for EAS, where charges are on a per-call basis, or a flat rate option, that charge a set rate for unlimited calling.

Extended Community Calling

Extended Community Calling (ECC) was introduced in 1993 to promote the equality of local calling areas. ECC is a considered a local service offering that affects calls between exchanges that were considered long-distance prior to 1993 and are either adjacent to each other or are within 15 miles of each other and not already included in an EAS calling area. ECC rates generally range from 1 to 8 cents per minute across the state, with 5 cents per minute being the common charge.

What's the difference between ECC and EAS?

Depending on your telephone company, EAS calls may be included in the price of your basic local service, offered on per-call basis or offered on an unlimited calling basis for a set monthly charge. ECC calls are typically priced on a per-minute basis.

How do I know if I am calling a local or ECC number?

You cannot count on the rule that a 7-digit call is free. Some 7-digit calls are considered an ECC or EAS call and will be charged accordingly. Also, some calls require you to dial the area code even though they are not considered a long distance call.

Your local phone company can provide you with detailed information regarding your specific local, EAS and ECC calling areas. This information may also be in your telephone book or on your provider's Web site.

Local Toll and Long Distance Service

The term local toll service, also called intraLATA or local long distance service, refers to long distance calling within a geographic area known as a "Local Access and Transport Area (LATA)."

Long distance service, also called interLATA or state-to-state service, refers to calls terminating outside of your LATA. You have the ability to choose local toll and long distance provider. The local toll and long distance calls are often billed on a per-minute basis, although the providers often have package rate plans that may include calls you will not be charged for. Wisconsin has 4 primary LATAs, as shown on the map.



Other Options

Wireless, or cellular, phone companies offer a variety of pricing plans, some include long distance calling. Thoroughly review all of your options, as well as the terms and conditions of the wireless contract before selecting a provider.

It is also easy to purchase a pre-paid calling card for long distance service. The rates vary. Calling within the state may be priced differently than calling outside the state. Check the details before purchasing a calling card.

Who can help?

The PSC regulates the delivery and billing of local telephone services. Most complaints involving your local service can be directed to the PSC at the numbers below. However, long distance, wireless and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services are not regulated by the PSC.

- Madison area: 608-266-2001
- Toll Free: 1-800-225-7729
- <http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/complaint/default.aspx>

Complaints regarding cell phones, calling cards or long distance service may be directed to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

- Toll Free: 1-800-422-7128
- <http://datcp.state.wi.us>

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is an independent state agency that oversees more than 1,100 Wisconsin public utilities that provide natural gas, electricity, heat, steam, water and telecommunication services.



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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