

Will I have to pay a late fee?

Some phone companies will charge you a late fee if they do not receive your full payment by the date your bill is due. The phone bill should state when a late fee may be charged and how much it could be.

The late payment fee can be no more than 1.5% per month for basic telephone service. Companies providing other services, such as wireless and Internet access, can charge you more.

Do I have to pay charges that I'm questioning? Will I be billed late fees on those charges?

If you disagree with a charge on your bill, contact your phone company as soon as possible to question the charge. You do not have to pay the charge and cannot be charged a late fee for it while the company is looking into the dispute.

If you are dissatisfied with the company's position, you may file a complaint at the CPUC. To avoid having your service disconnected and being charged late fees, you should deposit the disputed amount with the CPUC when you file your complaint.

Can the phone company disconnect my service?

Your telephone service may be disconnected:

- If you do not pay your bill,
- Provide false information when applying for service,
- Repeatedly pay your bill late,
- Misuse the service or equipment, or
- Violate the service contract.

Some phone companies cannot disconnect your basic local service for nonpayment of other services such as long distance, Internet access, or wireless services. However, services that you do not pay for may be blocked.

If you do not pay anything on the bill, the phone company can disconnect your local service. Before disconnecting your service the company will usu-

ally send you a notice warning you that service will be disconnected if you do not pay within seven days. Disconnection policies may vary so ask your company about its policy.

Even if all of your services are disconnected for nonpayment, phone companies are required, when possible, to allow you to call the emergency 911 number from the disconnected phone line. Wireless phones only need charged batteries to call 911.

You can ask to have your service turned on once you have paid your bill; however, there may be a "reconnection charge" and you may be required to pay a deposit.



Will I be charged a deposit?

If you do not have a good payment history, or have not yet established a good credit rating, the phone company may ask you to pay a deposit.

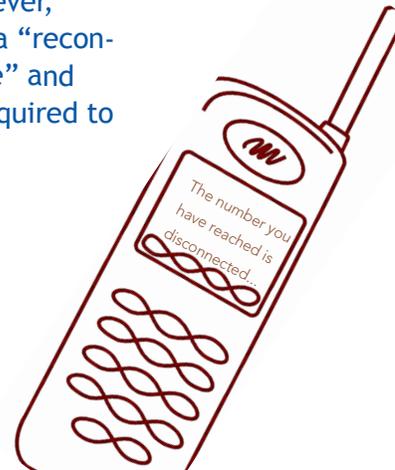
If your phone was disconnected for nonpayment, you may have to pay a deposit before it is turned back on.

Consumers on the low-income service called California LifeLine (also known as ULTS) do not pay a deposit.

The deposit is returned after you have made payments on time for one year or if you disconnect service, whichever comes first.

Since phone numbers are frequently reused, you may not be able to get your phone number back.

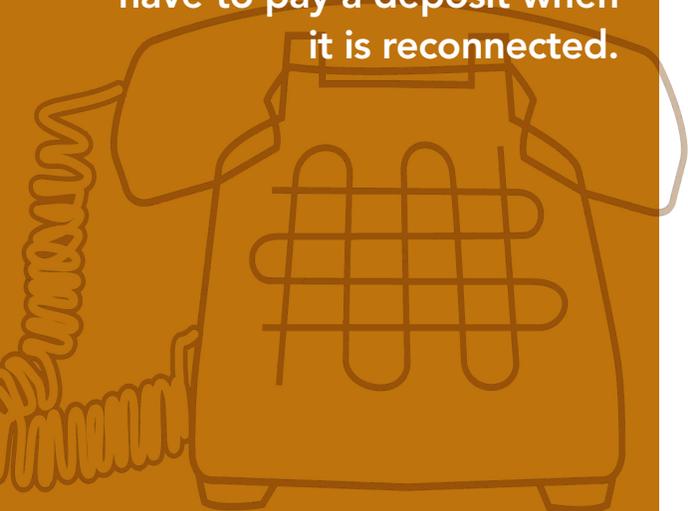
Your phone company cannot block you from switching your service to another phone company, even if your bill has not been paid. But, your new company may require a deposit or limit your service because of that bill.





Late Payments, Disconnections and Deposits: What You Need to Know.

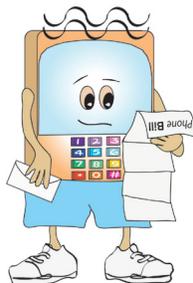
If you have trouble paying your phone bills, you may be charged late payment fees, your service may be disconnected and you may have to pay a deposit when it is reconnected.



www.calphoneinfo.com
1 (800) 649 7570 – CPUC Hotline

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

www.cpuc.ca.gov
www.fcc.gov
www.ftc.gov



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I'm the Keypad Kid bringing you our *Plain Talk Series* about telephone information!

If you have an unresolved dispute with your phone company, you can file a complaint at www.calphoneinfo.com or call the CPUC hotline at: 1 (800) 649-7570.

Late Payment Fees, Disconnections and Deposits - July 2007



Late Payment Fees Disconnected Service Deposits



Plain Talk Series

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