

## Do I really need to choose a long distance company?

If you make very few toll calls you may not need to specify a long distance company. Using a dial-around number or a prepaid calling card may be a better deal for you.

### The two types of calling provided by long distance companies

Local toll service, or IntraLATA (Local Access and Transport Area) toll service, is for calls that are placed beyond your local telephone company's local calling area to nearby areas.

InterLATA toll service is for calls that terminate outside the caller's LATA. The calls can stay within the caller's state, be placed to another state, or be placed to another country.

You can subscribe to the same long distance company for both types of calls, or you can have different companies for each type.

When shopping for a long distance company, consumers should compare charges on recent bills with the rates offered by the companies being considered. Keep in mind the time of day and day of the week you normally call. Many long distance companies will make this comparison for you.

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## CALL THE PSC Before You Get HUNG UP

If you have questions, you may call the Florida Public Service Commission's Division of Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Assistance at **1-800-342-3552**, fax your questions to 1-800-511-0809, or contact the FPSC via the following E-mail address: [contact@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:contact@psc.state.fl.us). See our Internet home page at [www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com).

Or write to the Florida Public Service Commission  
Division of Regulatory Compliance and  
Consumer Assistance  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

**COMPETITION CALLING**  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**HOW TO CHOOSE A LONG DISTANCE CARRIER**



## Which companies can I choose from?

There are nearly 700 long distance companies currently registered to provide service in the state of Florida. To find out which companies provide service in your area, check in the yellow pages listings under Telephone Companies, or call your local telephone company for a complete list.

When shopping around for a long distance company, consumers may consider comparing charges on a recent long distance bill with the rates of the company being considered. When making the comparison, it is important to notice the day of the week and time that calls were made. Some companies may provide this comparison for you.

### Questions to ask when comparing companies:

- ◆ What is the rate for state-to-state calls?
- ◆ What is the rate for calls made within Florida?
- ◆ Are there any time-of-day restrictions on those rates?
- ◆ Is this a promotional rate?
- ◆ Is there a monthly fee?
- ◆ Is there a monthly minimum-use requirement?
- ◆ Do you bill in full minute or in partial minute increments?
- ◆ What is the minimum I will be billed for a direct-dialed call?
- ◆ How will I be notified of rate changes?
- ◆ Will I be billed on my local telephone company bill or will I receive a bill directly from my long distance company?
- ◆ Is there a charge to have the toll charges included on my local telephone bill?
- ◆ Will your company cover the cost of the local telephone company switching me to your company?
- ◆ Do I have to call the local telephone company to make the change or do you do that?
- ◆ How long will it be before my service is switched to the new company?

## Should I use a prepaid calling card?

Prepaid calling cards can be a great way to save money on toll calls, especially when you are away from home. It's a good idea to keep one with you in case you need to make a toll call, and you don't want to make a collect call.

If you make few toll calls from home and don't mind the inconvenience of having to dial the extra numbers required when using a prepaid calling card, it may be to your advantage not to have a presubscribed long distance carrier. A presubscribed carrier is the company you have designated to carry toll calls of one or both types in which you dial "1" plus the 10-digit number.

If you decide that you do not need a presubscribed long distance company for either type of toll call, inform your local telephone company that you want no presubscribed carrier.

## What about those 10-10 numbers?

They are what is known as access codes. Every long distance company has one. If you dial an access code before dialing the area code and telephone number, you are directing the telephone switch to route your call through that particular company. These access codes are sometimes referred to as "dial-around" numbers since, by using one, you are dialing around your presubscribed long distance company.

Before using a dial-around number, be sure you know what the rate for the call will be and whether there are any additional charges involved. Some dial-around plans include a monthly charge if you use the dial-around number even once in a month. Some plans bill for a certain number of minutes even if you don't talk that long.