



*A Consumer's Guide to
Understanding Residential Charges*

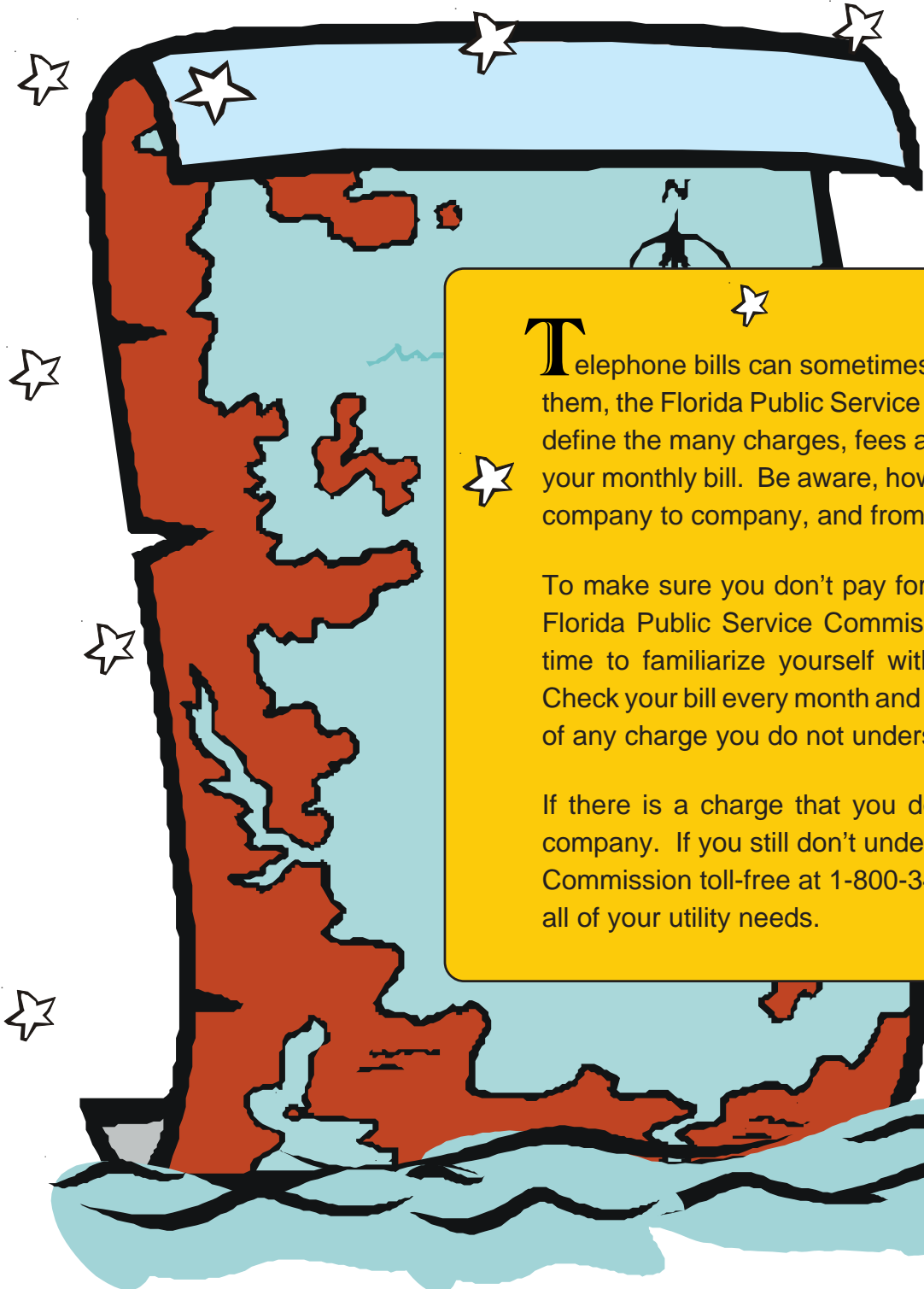
NAVIGATING *Your* PHONE BILL

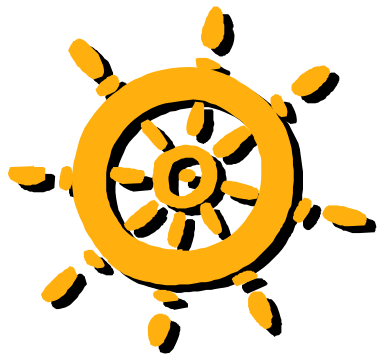


Telephone bills can sometimes be confusing. To help you understand them, the Florida Public Service Commission has created this booklet to define the many charges, fees and taxes you are likely to encounter on your monthly bill. Be aware, however, that these charges can vary from company to company, and from city to city.

To make sure you don't pay for services you didn't order or need, the Florida Public Service Commission recommends that you take some time to familiarize yourself with the charges on your telephone bill. Check your bill every month and do not hesitate to ask for an explanation of any charge you do not understand.

If there is a charge that you don't understand, call your local phone company. If you still don't understand it, call the Florida Public Service Commission toll-free at 1-800-342-3552. We're here to assist you with all of your utility needs.





NAVIGATING *Your* PHONE BILL

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LOCAL PHONE CHARGES

FCC LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY LINE CHARGE

Sometimes listed as *Number Portability Surcharge* or *Service Provider Number Portability Fee*. Local phone companies assess this fee to recover the costs associated with upgrading their systems to allow consumers to retain their existing telephone numbers when switching to another local telephone company within the same exchange. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) allows the companies to charge this fee to cover these costs, but does not require them to do so.

RESIDENTIAL LINE CHARGE

Sometimes listed as *Local Phone Service* or *Residential Line*. This is the basic monthly charge for local phone service. It may be a flat-rate fee or may be a flat rate plus usage charge.

EMERGENCY 911 CHARGE

May also be listed as *Emergency 911 Surcharge* or *Emergency Telephone Service*. This fee is collected on behalf of and paid to the city or county where a customer lives. The funds are used to pay for 911 emergency services regardless of whether a household has ever made a 911 call.

FCC CHARGE FOR NETWORK ACCESS

Also known as a *Subscriber Line Charge* or *Interstate Access Surcharge*. This is a fee that the Federal Communications Commission allows local phone companies to charge its customers to compensate the local phone companies for part of the cost of providing a phone line. The FCC does not require companies to charge this fee to the consumer and the money does not go to the FCC.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS SYSTEM ACT SURCHARGE

Also known as the *Telecommunications Relay Surcharge* or *Telecommunications Relay Service*. This fee is used to provide telecommunications devices and relay services for Florida residents with hearing or speech impairments. The entire fee, which is used to pay for the devices and services, is remitted to the nonprofit corporation established by Florida law.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND CHARGE

Sometimes listed as *Federal Universal Service Fund (USF)* or *FED USF*. The purpose of this charge is to ensure affordable access to telecommunications services for telephone customers with low incomes or who live in areas where the cost of providing telephone service is high. It also provides discounts on telecommunications and Internet access for schools and libraries, and advanced services for rural health care providers. Congress has mandated that all telephone companies providing interstate service must contribute to the USF. Although not required to do so by the FCC, many telephone companies choose to pass this charge on directly to the consumer.

OPTIONAL SERVICES

These are "add-on" services chosen by the phone customer for features such as call waiting, caller ID, call blocking, voice mail, etc.



LONG DISTANCE CHARGES

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Lists the total charges for all long distance calls. Itemized information on each call is usually provided on a separate page. The long distance bill includes the date of each call, the originating phone number, the long distance number called, the city where the long distance number is located, the starting time of the call, the number of minutes each call lasted, and the total charge for each call. Consumers may choose to be billed directly rather than have the long distance charges appear on the local telephone bill.

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MINIMUM USAGE CHARGE

Some long distance companies charge their customers a minimum monthly fee for long distance service, regardless of whether they make any long distance calls.

CALLING PLAN CHARGES

Most long distance companies offer calling plans ranging in price from a few dollars to \$25 a month to give consumers more options on long distance rates. Companies offering calling cards and dial-around plans (such as those "10-10" plans you see advertised on TV) also may charge a monthly fee to use their services.

TAXES

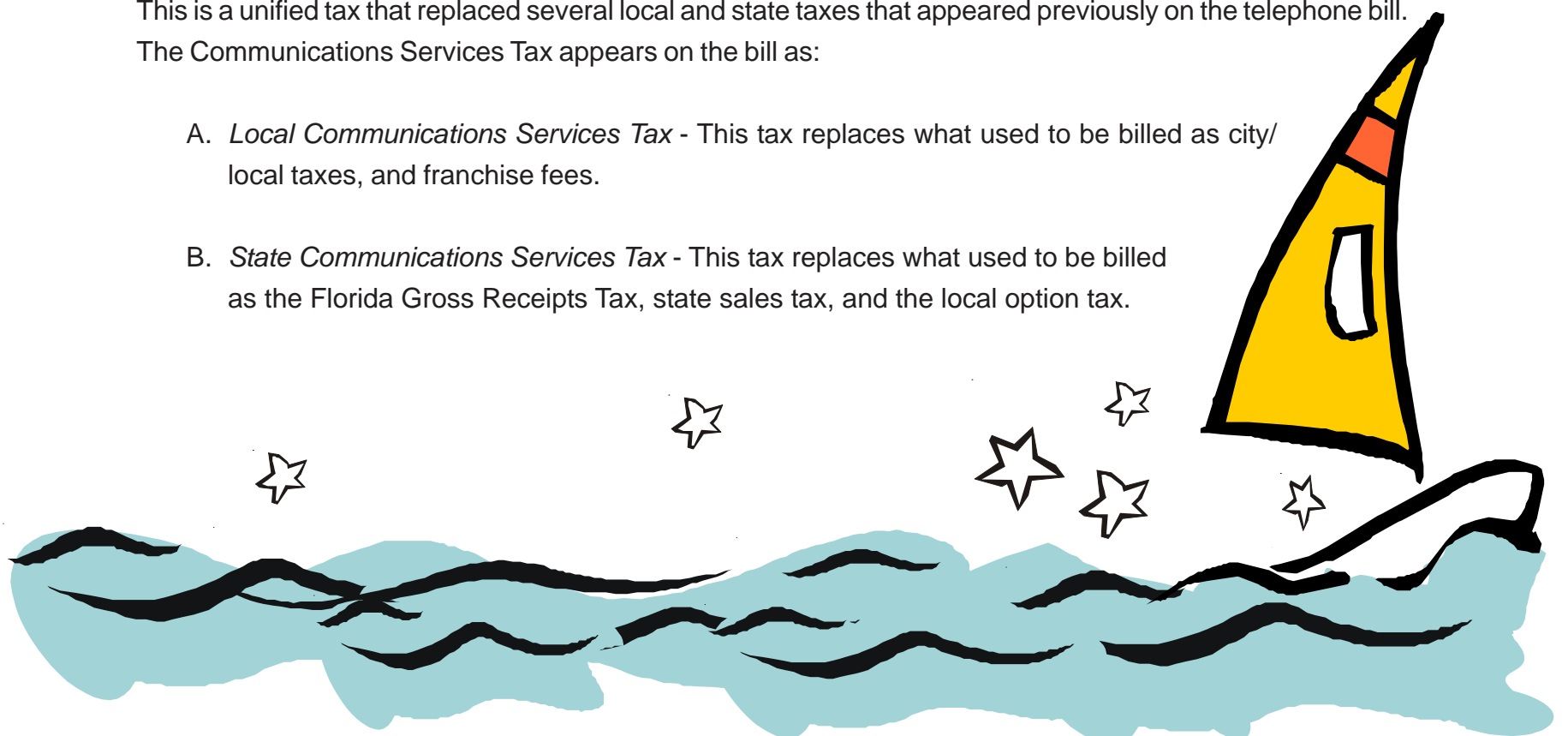
FEDERAL EXCISE TAX

This is a three-percent tax mandated by the federal government (not the Federal Communications Commission) and imposed on local telephone service.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE TAX

This is a unified tax that replaced several local and state taxes that appeared previously on the telephone bill. The Communications Services Tax appears on the bill as:

- A. *Local Communications Services Tax* - This tax replaces what used to be billed as city/local taxes, and franchise fees.
- B. *State Communications Services Tax* - This tax replaces what used to be billed as the Florida Gross Receipts Tax, state sales tax, and the local option tax.



Note: Some state and federal statutes, rules and regulations require that certain taxes and fees be included in the base for other taxes and fees.

24-Hour On-line Complaint Forms
www.floridapsc.com



You may call the Florida Public Service Commission at

1-800-342-3552,

or fax your questions to **1-800-511-0809.**

You may also contact the PSC via the following

E-mail address: *contact@psc.state.fl.us*.

See our Internet home page at www.floridapsc.com.

Or write to us:

Florida Public Service Commission

Division of Safety, Reliability and Consumer Assistance

2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850