

What Is A Payphone?

A payphone is any phone where you have to provide payment for the call. Examples are typical payphones you find in airports, restaurants, gas stations, etc. Other types of payphones would be telephones in hotel/motel rooms or hospital rooms.

Who Owns the Payphone?

A Payphone Service Provider (PSP) owns the payphone. A PSP can be a local telephone company, an independent company, or the owner of the business where the payphone is located.

Who Sets the Rates For Payphones?

Rates for local calls from a payphone are no longer regulated due to a decision by the federal government. This means that the Payphone Service Provider sets its own rates.

Who Provides the Telephone Service?

Operator Service Providers (OSPs) provide the long distance service and sometimes the local telephone service. Generally, when you dial "0" before any other number, the OSP will handle your call.

Before Making A Call

- 1. Determine which Operator Service Provider (OSP) is handling your call.** Each public telephone provider must post the name, address, and toll-free telephone number of the OSP on or near the telephone. Also, the OSP is required to identify itself at the beginning of the call before the consumer incurs any charges.
- 2. Determine the rate you will be charged.** The OSP is required to notify the caller of his right to obtain the rates that will be charged before the call is connected and billed. The caller will be able to follow the voice prompts such as pressing a button or staying on the line, or the caller can phone the toll-free number listed. This will give the caller the opportunity to hang up if the price is too high.
- 3. Determine how you will pay for the call.** Unless you plan to use coins to pay for your call, you will be required to call collect or to charge the call to your calling card, home phone, or a third party. If you plan to use your calling card, be sure to follow the directions given by your long distance company. If you don't follow the directions correctly, the call may be handled by the OSP. The OSP will bill you at their rates and not the rates of your long distance company.

Know Your Rights

- 1. You have the right to emergency calls.** Any call made to emergency numbers such as 911 or to the Telecommunications Relay Service will be provided free of charge from a payphone.
- 2. You have the right to use your preferred long distance carrier at a payphone.** Federal law does not allow the blocking of long distance companies from public telephones. You can use the long distance company you want by dialing the access code or 800 number.

Consumer Tips

- ◆ Only use a payphone located in a prominent, well-lit area.
- ◆ Do not use a payphone if you do not see the name, address, and toll-free telephone number of the OSP. Omission of this information may mean the OSP is not a legitimate provider.

- ◆ If you are using a calling card, make sure you have an account with the long distance company who provided the card. This means that you should not continue to use the calling card if you changed to a different long distance provider. The rates available to you when you were a customer of the company who provided the card may not be available to you now that you've switched companies.
- ◆ Make sure you follow the directions your long distance company gave you for using your calling card. Be sure to ask if there is a surcharge for calls made from a payphone.

Who Do I Contact About My Complaint?

- First contact the OSP at the number and/or address listed on the phone.
- If you are unable to resolve your complaint with the OSP and your problem is regarding a call placed from one location in Kentucky to another location in Kentucky, call the Kentucky Public Service Commission toll free at 1-800-772-4636.

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- If your problem is regarding a call placed from one state to another state, write the Federal Communications Commission at the following address:

Federal Communications Commission
Common Carrier Bureau
COMPLAINTS
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554
1-888-225-5322

Kentucky Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 615
Frankfort, KY 40602
www.psc.state.ky.us
1-800-772-4636

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