

Saving Money on Phone Repair Bills

IS MY LOCAL PHONE COMPANY RESPONSIBLE FOR REPAIRING PHONE TROUBLE AT NO CHARGE?

No. Your local phone company is required to repair trouble at no charge if the trouble exists on the regulated portion of your phone line. If trouble exists on the deregulated portion of your phone line, which is the inside wiring within your home as well as your telephone equipment, you can use other providers besides your local phone company to repair the trouble. Your local phone company and other providers will charge you for repairing inside wire or your telephone equipment. The Missouri Public Service Commission does not regulate the charges for repairing inside wire or telephone equipment located within your home.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE PHONE TROUBLE?

You can help resolve phone trouble by initially determining whether the trouble exists in the deregulated or regulated portions of the phone network. This determination is helpful because your local phone company may bill you additional charges to locate *(and resolve)* trouble contained in the deregulated portion of your phone service. Your local phone company will not bill you for repairing trouble contained in the regulated portion of your phone service.

The deregulated portion of your phone service is the inside wiring and telephone equipment located within your home. The specific point where your phone service is divided between regulated and deregulated service is contained in a small gray box located on the outside of your home. This small gray box is called a Network Interface Device (See Figure No. 1). Your local phone company is responsible for installing and maintaining this box; however you can make arrangements with other providers besides your local phone company to install or maintain your inside wire or phones.



Figure No. 1

HOW DO I DETERMINE WHETHER MY LOCAL PHONE COMPANY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FIXING MY PHONE TROUBLE AT NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE?

If you have more than one phone in your house check to see if all phones have dial tone. If all other phones except one have dial tone, plug a working phone into the plug where the phone does not work. If you receive dial tone then your trouble is a defective phone. If you have only one phone or if all of your phones fail to produce a dial tone, then you will need to conduct further testing. Beyond this stage, your ability to determine whether your trouble is caused by a defective phone line depends on whether you have a Network Interface Device (NID) on the outside of your home.

If you don't have a NID, your local phone company will need to make the determination of where trouble exists. Note that if you do not have a NID and your local phone company determines the trouble exists in your inside wiring or telephone equipment, you may or may not be billed a trouble isolation fee depending on your service provider. At that time, you will need to decide whether you want your local telephone company to repair the trouble or make arrangements with another provider. To repair inside wire or your telephone equipment, your local telephone company, like other providers, may bill you for making such repairs. If trouble exists on the regulated portion of your phone service your local telephone company will be expected to repair the trouble at no charge.

If you have a NID, you can proceed using the following instructions for making the determination of where trouble exists on your line. You will need a screwdriver. Using a screwdriver, unscrew the customer access screw on the right side of your NID. Open cover and swing cover door all the way to the left. ***Warning: DO NOT open inner cover – It is the responsibility of the telephone company to make the necessary connections under this cover. Opening may expose you to electrical hazard!!*** Inside the NID you should be able to locate one or two telephone modular plugs (see Figure No. 2).



Figure No. 2

A NID will have one plug for each line running into your home. (Figure No. 2 shows a NID with two such plugs, which indicates two lines are serving this home.) Plug in a working telephone into the modular plug. If your NID contains two modular plugs, test both. **If you hear dial tone on your telephone then this sound indicates the regulated portion of your phone line is working properly.** Stated differently, if you hear dial tone from the telephone plugged into a NID's modular plug but still do not have dial tone within your home then trouble must exist on the deregulated portion of your phone service such as your inside wiring or telephone equipment.

If you plug a telephone into a NID's modular plug and do not hear dial tone then you will want to ensure the phone you have plugged in is a working telephone.

How can I ensure I have a working phone? The simplest and most convenient way is to take your phone to a neighbor or friend's home that has a working telephone line. Then unplug one of their working telephones and plug your phone in. If you receive dial tone on their phone and not on yours you have a defective telephone. If you receive dial tone on your phone then your phone is fine. After verifying your phone is working return to your NID and conduct the test procedures described above.

What should I do if I still don't hear a dial tone after plugging in a working phone at the NID? Call your local telephone repair service. You have isolated the trouble in the local telephone company's network. Your local telephone company will make needed repairs at no charge.

Make sure your NID's cover is closed after conducting this test.