

Phone Lines

Where does the responsibility end?

Consumers are often faced with decisions on phone service, installation and equipment. Many phone companies offer customers a maintenance contract (for a monthly fee) which will cover the cost of fixing their phone line inside their home.

If you choose not to subscribe to a maintenance contract, you may be charged a trip charge PLUS another charge for actually fixing your phone if the problem is found to be with your inside wiring (wiring inside your home). Before calling the phone company:

- > Check all the phones in your home for a receiver accidentally left off the hook.
- > Make sure the phone you are using is plugged securely into the wall outlet.
- > Disconnect any answering machines or modems to see if the line clears.
- > Try unplugging modular phones (plug in and out of the outlet) one phone at a time to see if the trouble clears.
- > Try all phones – one of them could be bad. If the problem occurs on more than one phone, the problem could be in your inside wire or the telephone company's equipment.

Your home is equipped with a protection device to help guard against electrical interferences such as lightning or downed power lines. This protector, commonly called the Network Interface Device (NID), also can be used to test your telephone line to determine where the trouble is located. The NID is usually a gray box located on the outside of the house, usually near the electric meter. The device will be marked, indicating that it is telephone company equipment.

If your NID is capable of being used to test telephones, it will have a snap open front cover, or will require a straight-bladed (slotted tip) screwdriver to open. Instructions will be printed inside.

- 1) Open the front cover and locate the cord inside. (The cord will look similar to the one on the base of your modular telephone.)
- 2) Unplug the cord inside the NID, and insert the base cord from your modular telephone.
- 3) If you can hear dial tone, the telephone set and the telephone line are working.

If the device has a plastic hex nut recessed on the front cover and that is the only way to access the device, **DO NOT** loosen the hex nut. **The device IS NOT CAPABLE of being used to test your telephone and should not be opened.**

REMEMBER: “Inside” wire starts from the box. The wire may run directly into your home, or it may run on the outside from the box to its entry point into your home.

For More Information

The Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates investor-owned water, sewer, natural gas, electric and steam utilities. The PSC also has limited jurisdiction over telecommunications providers in Missouri. The PSC works to ensure Missouri citizens receive safe, reliable and reasonably priced utility services. If you have an inquiry, billing question or service-related issue that your utility provider cannot answer, please call the PSC at **1-800-392-4211** or visit our website at **psc.mo.gov**.



Missouri Public Service Commission

200 Madison Street • P.O. Box 360 • Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0360
Website: psc.mo.gov **Email:** pscinfo@psc.mo.gov **Phone:** 1-800-392-4211