

**TABLE 7 (continued)  
WHO REMITS THE SURCHARGE?**

STATE	CARRIERS THAT MUST REMIT THE SURCHARGE
Utah	All providers of toll (or equivalent) services retailed billed to customers. All 13 LECs, 85 interexchange providers and all cellular and ESMR companies are now participating in Utah. 1994 collections were approximately \$4,000,000.
Vermont	All carriers who are certified for in-state service or who provide interstate service in Vermont are subject. Basically, any telecommunications provider who sends bills to Vermont customers must remit the surcharge.
Washington	All carriers are subject to the surcharge.
Wisconsin	All carriers with revenues over \$200,000 per year.
Wyoming	All telecommunications providers.

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

Table 8 indicates that, when line or customer charges are used, the charge is most often applicable to all access lines or equivalent. The amount of the line charge is typically the amount to be collected divided by the number of access lines.

<b>TABLE 8 LINE OR CUSTOMER CHARGES</b>	
<b>STATE</b>	<b>LINES AND CARRIERS SUBJECT TO THE CHARGE AND AMOUNT OF THE CHARGE</b>
Arizona	All telecommunications service providers that interconnect to the public switched network are required to participate in the Fund. Any provider of telecommunications service may file either a Fund tariff or price list, if appropriate, establishing a flow-through mechanism to collect the surcharge approved by the Commission and calculated by the administrator.
Colorado	Local exchange carriers hold exclusive accounts and all access lines are surcharged. The line charge is based on half the total fund divided by the total state access lines.
Connecticut	All carriers are subject to charge, but they are not required to pass it on to customers. The charge is based on revenues
Idaho	All local exchange carriers shall remit a cents-per-line surcharge with a business-residential differential equal to the statewide average business-residential price ratio. The Commission conducts an annual review and adjusts surcharge amounts as required to maintain an adequate balance and ensure that distributions can be made for the year.
Kansas	There is a proposal to decrease the amount of access and related toll charges to make intrastate toll rates comparable to interstate toll rates.
Maine	All carriers and all lines are subject. The amount depends on the difference between economic cost (which may not be the incumbent's embedded cost) and the existing access rate.
Utah	All local exchange lines of all LECs or competitive LECs are subject. The line charge is a maximum of \$.07 per month, as mandated by statute, but the charge has never been imposed.

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

Table 9 indicates that other funding mechanisms include charges based on some measure of minutes of use.

<b>TABLE 9 OTHER FUNDING MECHANISMS</b>	
<b>STATE</b>	<b>MECHANISM USED</b>
Arkansas	Collected from cellular carriers and IXC's on the basis of their proportion of retail billed minutes of use.
Oklahoma	IXC's pay a flat amount based on minutes of use.
Rhode Island	Funding is by New England Telephone, which absorbs the credit granted on Lifeline customers' bills. Currently the credit is \$7 per eligible customer per month, which is twice the Subscriber Line Charge.
Texas	Expenses of the Dual Party Relay provider, the universal service fund administrator, and associated Commission expenses are totaled monthly. Assessment is based generally on minutes of use. Dual Party Relay expenses are allocated to the LEC's and IXC's based on their share of total minutes of use. The LEC share is then divided among them based on each LEC's number of access lines. The IXC share of the allocation is divided among all IXC's based on minutes of use.

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

As shown in Table 10, the Universal Service Fund Administrator is most often either an industry representative or a neutral third party. Table 10 also indicates that the fund administrator is generally selected either on the basis of a competitive bidding process or by the Commission.

TABLE 10 FUND ADMINISTRATION		
RESPONSE		STATES
The Fund is Administered by:	Industry Representative	AZ. AR, CA (High-Cost Fund), IN, OR, RI, TX, VT
	Neutral Third Party	CA (Lifeline Fund), HI, ID, KS, PA, WI, WY
	Commission	CO, CT, UT, WY
	State Agency	WA
The Fund Administrator is Selected by:	Competitive Bid	CO, ID, KS, NV, VT, WI
	Commission Selection or Appointment	AZ, HI, OK, TX
	Mandate by Statute	UT
	Other	AR, RI

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

Table 11 indicates that eligibility to receive universal service support requires a company to be a certified telecommunications carrier, serve high-cost areas, and/or provide service to identified, low-income customers.

<b>TABLE 11 CARRIER ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE SUPPORT</b>	
<b>STATE</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>
Arizona	Eligibility to receive support shall be based upon the difference between the benchmark rates (rates approved by the Commission for a provider of basic local exchange service, plus the FCC approved CCLC), and the appropriate cost to provide basic local exchange telephone service (net of any universal service support from federal sources) as determined by the Commission..
Arkansas	Fixed as part of the determination of how the LEC's carrier common line revenue requirement is recovered.
California	Currently, only certified local exchange carriers can receive money from the fund.
Colorado	The telecommunications provider must be a certified local exchange carrier.
Connecticut	The telecommunications provider must provide lifeline credit.
Hawaii	Telecommunication carriers providing basic telephone service to qualified high-cost areas or to qualified low-income customers.
Kansas	The proposal is that companies that provide service to rural high-cost areas would be eligible.
Maine	To receive support, a carrier must be a ubiquitous carrier of last resort.
Nevada	The carrier must provide basic service in the market. Its basic service rates must be geographically averaged, and the carrier must provide lifeline and link up programs.  Small providers of basic service must have interstate and intrastate switched access rates in parity, monthly rates for residential customers must be between \$8 and \$16 and between \$16 and \$20 for business customers. (A small provider must have less than 10,000 lines and must have a rate of return below the authorized level.)

**TABLE 11 (continued)**  
**CARRIER ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE SUPPORT**

STATE	CRITERIA
Oklahoma	A LEC with costs that require support.
Pennsylvania	Each local service provider with basic universal service subscribers in a high cost of service area will receive USF assistance. USF assistance will be channeled to end-user subscribers in the form of high-cost assistance credits. Comments have been invited regarding the competitive neutrality of USF payments to local service providers.
Texas	LECs submit monthly reports indicating lost revenue associated with telephone assistance. Eligibility for high-cost assistance support is currently undergoing a review based on the new law.
Utah	Eligibility is determined by law, rules, and joint stipulation of carriers and regulators.
Vermont	Not yet determined for high-cost distributions.
Wisconsin	Eligibility varies by program. Rate-shock mitigation is only available to rate regulated companies, since only these companies will have large ordered rate increases. The other programs, including high-cost support, are available to all providers, including new competitors.
Wyoming	Eligibility to receive support is based on a statutory provision that without such support the rate would be “[exceed] 130% of state-wide average rate.”

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

Table 12 indicates that it is most often the case that the amount to be raised is determined based on estimated future or recent historical requirements.

<b>TABLE 12 DETERMINATION OF THE AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY THE FUND</b>	
<b>STATE</b>	<b>HOW IS THE AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY THE FUND DETERMINED?</b>
Arizona	The administrator will calculate the total Arizona Universal Service Fund support due all local exchange carriers who have been granted Arizona Universal Service Fund support by the Commission. Administrative costs and audit fees will be added to this amount.
Arkansas	The amount was fixed by Order 38 in docket number 83-042-U.
California	For the High Cost Fund, small and mid-sized carriers determine their need, but they must pass a means test. For Lifeline, the number is estimated from the previous year's need.
Colorado	Total Estimate + Administrative Cost for each fiscal year.
Connecticut	Total costs of program and administrative costs are estimated for the forthcoming year.
Hawaii	Based on the fund's income and revenue forecasts and projections.
Maine	Self determined.
Nevada	An assessment determined by the Commission.
Oklahoma	Commission determines the required amount for each year.
Pennsylvania	The amount to be raised will be determined primarily by the support requirement of high-cost areas.
Rhode Island	Each eligible lifeline customer receives a bill credit equal to twice the Common Carrier Line Charge. Currently, the Common Carrier Line Charge is \$3.50, which results in a \$7 credit on a customer's telephone bill of \$9.25. The customer pays \$2.25 per month.
Texas	LECs submit monthly information showing the amount of revenue lost due to participation in the Telephone Assistance (low-income) program.

**TABLE 12 (continued)**  
**DETERMINATION OF THE AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY THE FUND**

STATE	HOW IS THE AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY THE FUND DETERMINED?
Utah	There is an annual evaluation of requirements to maintain reasonable rates.
Vermont	The amount to be raised is determined by the Public Service Board, which considers: (1) appropriations for E-911, (2) estimated contractual cost for TRS, and (3) estimated benefits under lifeline.
Wisconsin	The Commission sets an anticipated budget based on projected funding needs. This is based on the estimated cost of providing the supported services.
Wyoming	Based on calculations using prior year's rates to determine qualifying amount to be paid to providers.

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

Table 13 indicates that customers are not generally made aware of the subsidy they are receiving, although they may be made aware that the subsidy is portable between providers. The indicated lack of portability between providers may be due to the fact that up until now customers have generally not had any alternate provider of local exchange service.

<b>TABLE 13</b>		
<b>CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT PORTABILITY</b>		
	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>STATES</b>
Customers are made aware of the subsidy on their bills:	Yes	OR, RI, WI, WY
	No	AR, CA, CO, HI, ID, IN, ME, NV, OK, UT
The subsidy is portable between providers:	Yes	CT, ME, OR, WI
	No	AR, CA, CO, HI, ID, IN, OK, UT, WY
Customers are made aware of the subsidy's portability between providers:	Yes	OR, WA
	No	AR, CO, IN, ME, UT, WI

Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

Table 14 presents the respondents' comments about state universal service funds. The comments indicate a variety of approaches to funding universal service. Among the interesting variations are Indiana's plan, which considers both average cost and revenues in determining support levels for individual companies and Wisconsin's plan, which uses both the cost of local service and median household income to determine support levels.

**TABLE 14**  
**COMMENTS ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUNDING**

Arizona	Responses were based on a set of draft rules that have not been approved by the commission.
California	The Commission is currently in the process of completely overhauling its entire universal service program. The Commission is trying to ensure that its universal service mechanisms are compatible with a competitive local exchange market. Draft rules were released this past July. The responses to this survey are based on the Commission's current programs, not the proposed changes.
Hawaii	The discussion of universal service is contained in Act 225, 1995 Session Laws of Hawaii and Draft Administrative Rules on the Universal Service Fund, Chapter 81.
Indiana	The Indiana High Cost Fund pays two kinds of support: (1). An annual payment to qualifying companies to help cover high loop costs. (2). End-user offset payments ordered paid to ten companies in Cause Number 37905 (September 19, 1989). Amounts per access line are fixed for these companies and no new companies may apply for this type of support. These payments amount to approximately \$80,000 annually, and payout is determined accordingly.

**TABLE 14 (continued)**  
**COMMENTS ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUNDING**

Indiana (continued)	Qualifying companies are paid a percentage of the difference between 25 percent of their loop costs and the sum of Carrier Common Line Revenue and Residence and Business End User Common Line Charge Revenue. No payment is made if the difference is zero or negative (i.e., if 25 percent of loop costs is less than or equal to these revenues). If the difference is positive and the company's average Residence Revenue per line is less than 100% of the statewide average, no payment is made. If the difference is positive and the company's average Residence Revenue per line is between 100% and 115% of the statewide average, 50% of the difference is paid. If the company's average Residence Revenue per line is greater than 115% of the statewide average, 100% of the difference is paid.
Kansas	Approval of the Fund is anticipated for 1996. Implementation is anticipated for March 1997.
Louisiana	This docket is under consideration by the Louisiana Public Service Commission. Docket Number U-20883, Subdocket A.
Michigan	The Legislature is currently rewriting telecommunications law. The current version calls for the creation of a task force - see survey for rest.
New Mexico	New Mexico has a state universal service fund in place, but no one is currently contributing to or drawing from it. The original funding mechanism was a surcharge levied on all LEC customers. This has since been set to \$0.00.  The New Mexico Exchange Carriers Association is the board that was set to oversee the fund. The Commission sits on the board as observers. They have proposed some draft rules but they have not yet been acted on. The independent LECs felt that they should be able to draw from the fund whenever they said that they needed dollars. Staff thought that eligibility to receive support should be based on a standard that without support the LEC's coverage ratio (times interest earned) would be below three, or that a "mini" rate case should be held every two years or so to determine eligibility. Since the companies did not agree, they stopped drawing from the fund.

<b>TABLE 14 (continued)</b> <b>COMMENTS ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUNDING</b>	
Rhode Island	There is currently Docket 2252 "Comprehensive Review of Telecommunications Competition" that could affect the universal funding program as "Lifeline Program". Also there is Docket 2370 open to consider price regulation extension to Docket 1997, a four-year plan that ends December 31, 1995. Both Dockets could affect universal service funding.
Utah	The Division and Commission are evaluating the plans proposed to the FCC in their docket. The existing plan expires in 1996. Hearings are planned to decide any future changes.
Vermont	Only half of the problem, the collection part, has been solved. It is hoped that a bill will be passed this year that authorizes a high-cost distribution program.
Wisconsin	<p>The amounts providers are assessed for the Universal Service Fund may not be placed on customers bills. The Commission has approved link-up and lifeline programs for all LECs operating in Wisconsin. It has also created a program to provide spare voice mail boxes to homeless shelters, for use by the homeless. The state Universal Service Fund Pays voice mail providers the incremental cost of the boxes provided.</p> <p>The draft rules allow use of USF money for rate-shock mitigation. This allows the Commission to phase in large rate increases, while allowing the LEC to earn its authorized rate of return. Large increases are primarily a function of LECs' avoiding rate cases as long as possible, then needing large increases. The Commission allows rate-shock mitigation only for Commission ordered rates. In practice, this means that rate-shock mitigation is only given to some rate-of-return regulated LECs, although it is theoretically available to all providers.</p>

**TABLE 14 (continued)**  
**COMMENTS ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUNDING**

Wisconsin (continued)	<p>In contrast, high-rate-assistance credits, which pay a portion of the bill for local loops, are available to all providers. The portion is tied to median [monthly] household income (MHI) for the customer's area, and uses a progressive scale. The customer pays all of the rate up to 0.75% of MHI. For the amount between 0.75% and 1.5%, the Universal Service Fund pays half, and the customer pays half. For the portion of the rate above 1.5% of median household (and other, higher trigger levels), the Universal Service Fund pays increasingly higher percentages.</p> <p>The progressive scale provides protection for the customer, while not preventing market forces from operating. Unlike rate ceilings, customers will always pay less for a provider with lower rates, but keep the option of paying more for better service or more features. The high rate assistance credit plan allows providers to set rates as the market dictates, and will continue to function even if the provider deaverages its local rates. The Wisconsin plan does not provide incentives for skewed rates. The plan also does not rely on cost studies or designated providers of last resort, with the inherent incentives to "game" those requirements.</p>
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Source: Authors' construct from state responses to the NRRI's Universal Service Fund Survey

**RULES  
OF  
GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
515-12 TELEPHONE SERVICE**

**CHAPTER 515-12-1  
TELEPHONE SERVICE**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

515-12-1-.01	Definitions	515-12-1-.17	Quality of Service-General
515-12-1-.02	Records and Reports	515-12-1-.18	Service Objectives and Surveillance Levels
515-12-1-.03	Metering, Inspections and Tests	515-12-1-.19	Operator Handled Calls
515-12-1-.04	Customer Relations	515-12-1-.20	Local Dial Service
515-12-1-.05	Customer Deposits for Communication Services	515-12-1-.21	Interoffice Trunks
515-12-1-.06	Reasons for Denying Service	515-12-1-.22	Direct Distance Dial Service
515-12-1-.07	Insufficient Reasons for Denying Services	515-12-1-.23	Customer Trouble Reports
515-12-1-.08	Complaints and Appeals	515-12-1-.24	Safety
515-12-1-.09	Voluntary Suspension	515-12-1-.25	Application of Rules
515-12-1-.10	Directories	515-12-1-.26	Rules Govern All Telephone Utilities Subject to Commission Jurisdiction
515-12-1-.11	Engineering	515-12-1-.27	Variation of Rules not Permitted Under Law
515-12-1-.12	Construction Work Near Utility Facilities	515-12-1-.28	Telephone Service Disconnection
515-12-1-.13	Maintenance of Plant and Equipment	515-12-1-.29	Extended Area Service
515-12-1-.14	Customer Complaints and Trouble Reports	515-12-1-.30	Institutional Telecommunication Services
515-12-1-.15	Inspections and Tests	515-12-1-.31	Customer Owned Coin/Coinless Operator Telephones (COCOTs)
515-12-1-.16	Service Interruptions		

**515-12-1-.01 Definitions.** Terms used in these rules have the following meaning:

(a) **"Average Busy Season—Busy Hour Traffic"**—The average traffic volume for the busy season, busy hours.

(b) **"Base Rate Area"**—A specific area within an exchange service area as set forth in the telephone utilities' tariffs, maps or descriptions. Local exchange service within this area is furnished at uniform rates without extra mileage charges.

(c) **"Business Service"**—Telecommunications service provided a customer where the use is primarily or substantially of a business, professional, institutional or otherwise occupational nature.

(d) **"Busy Hour"**—The two consecutive half-hours each day during which the greatest volume of traffic is handled in the office.

(e) **"Busy Season"**—That period of the year during which the greatest volume of traffic is handled in the office.

(f) **"Calls"**—Customers' telephone messages attempted.

(g) **"Central Office"**—A switching unit, in a telecommunications system which provides service to the general public, having the necessary equipment and operating arrangements for terminating and interconnecting customer lines and trunks or trunks only. There may be more than one central office in a building.

(h) **"Channel"**—A path for communication between two or more stations or telephone utility offices, furnished in such a manner as the carrier may elect, whether by wire, radio or a combination thereof and whether or not by a single physical facility or route.

(i) **"Class of Service"**—A description of telecommunications service furnished a customer which denotes such characteristics as nature of use (business or residence) type of rate (flat rate or message rate). Classes of service are usually subdivided in "grades," such as individual line, two-party or four-party.

(j) **"Commission"**—The Georgia Public Service Commission.

(k) **"Customer"**—Any person, firm, partnership, corporation, municipality, cooperative, organization, governmental agency, etc., provided with telecommunications service by any utility.

(l) **"Customer Trouble Report"**—Any oral or written report from a customer or user of telecommunication service relating to a physical defect or to difficulty or dissatisfaction with the operation of the utility's facilities. This oral or written report should be made to a telephone company service representative on duty. Oral or written report should be made to the telephone company business office, or by calling repair service number as listed in the telephone directory. One report shall be counted for each oral or written report received although it may duplicate a previous report or merely involve an inquiry concerning progress on a previous report. Also, a separate report shall be counted for each telephone or PBX switchboard position reported in trouble when several items are reported by one customer at the same time, unless the group of troubles so reported is clearly related to a common cause.

(m) **"Exchange"**-- A unit established by a telephone utility for the administration of telecommunication service in a specified area for which a separate local rate schedule is provided. It may consist of one or more central offices together with associated plant facilities used in furnishing telecommunication services in that area.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 103

(n) **"Exchange Service Area"**—The geographical territory served by an exchange, usually embracing a city, town or village and its environs.

(o) **"Grade of Service"**—The number of parties (main stations) served on a telephone line such as one-party, two-party, four-party, etc.

(p) **"Individual Line Service"**—A classification of exchange service which provides that only one main station shall be served by the circuit connecting such station with the central office equipment.

(q) **"Intercept Service"**—A service arrangement provided by the utility whereby calls placed to a disconnected or discontinued telephone number are intercepted and the calling party is informed that the called telephone number has been disconnected or discontinued, or changed to another number, or that calls are being received by another telephone, etc.

(r) **"Interexchange Trunks"**—Transmission paths, including the conductors and associated equipment, connecting two exchanges.

(s) **"Line"**—A general term used in the communication industry in several different senses, the most important of which are:

1. The conductor or conductors and supporting or containing structures extending between customer stations and central offices, or between central offices whether they be in the same or different communities.

2. The conductors and circuit apparatus associated with a particular communication channel.

3. Any communication channel between two points disregarding the method of its derivation.

(t) **"Local Calling Area"**—The area within which telecommunication service is furnished customers under a specific schedule or exchange rates. A local calling area may include one or more exchange service areas or portions of exchange service areas.

(u) **"Local Exchange Service"**—Telecommunication service provided within local exchange service areas in accordance with the

tariffs. It includes the use of exchange facilities required to establish connections between stations within the exchange and between stations and the toll facilities serving the exchange.

(v) **"Local Message"**—A completed call between stations located within the same local calling area.

(w) **"Local Message Charge"**—The charge that applies for a completed telephone call that is made when the calling station and the stations to which the connection is established are both within the same local calling area, and a local message charge is applicable.

(x) **"Local Service Charge"**—The charge for furnishing facilities to enable a customer to send or receive telecommunications within the local service calling area. This local service calling area may include one or more exchange service areas.

(y) **"Long Distance Telecommunications Service"**—That part of the total communication service rendered by a utility which is furnished between customers in different local service areas in accordance with the rates and regulations specified in the utility's tariff.

(z) **"Message"**—A completed customer telephone call.

(aa) **"Message Rate Service"**—A form of exchange service under which all originated local messages are measured and charged for in accordance with the tariff.

(bb) **"Outside Plant"**—The telecommunications equipment and facilities installed on, along, over or under streets, alleys, highways or on private rights-of-way between the central office and customer's locations or between central offices.

(cc) **"Party Line Service"**—A classification of exchange service which provides for a number of main stations to be served by the same central office line.

(dd) **"Private Line"**—A circuit provided to furnish communication only between the two or more telephones or other terminal devices directly connected to it, and not having connection with either central office or PBX switching apparatus.

(ee) **"Public Telephone Service"**—An individual line customer service equipped with a coin collecting telephone instrument in-

stalled for the use of the general public in locations where the general public has access to these telephones.

(ff) "Regrade"—An application for a different grade of service.

(gg) "Service Line"—Those facilities owned and maintained by a customer or group of customers, which lines are connected with the facilities of a telephone utility for communication service.

(hh) "Station"—A telephone instrument or other terminal device.

(ii) "Tariff"—The entire body of rates, tolls, rentals, charges, classifications and rules, adopted by the utility and filed with the Commission.

(jj) "Telephone Utility"—Any person, firm, partnership or corporation engaged in the business of furnishing telecommunication services to the public under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Public Service Commission.

(kk) "Toll Connecting Trunks"—A general classification of trunks carrying toll traffic and ordinarily extending between a local office and a toll office, except trunks classified as tributary circuits.

(ll) "Toll Station"—A telephone connected to a toll line or directly to a toll board.

(mm) "Traffic"—Telephone call volume, based on number and duration of messages.

Authority Ga. L. 1878-79, p. 125, 1907, p. 72, 1922, pp. 143, 144, 1964, p. 338, 1965, p. 283, 1973, pp. 677-681, 1975, Sec. 2, p. 406. Administrative History. Original Rule was filed on December 29, 1975, effective January 1, 1976, as specified by Ga. L. 1975, p. 411.

**515-12-1-.02 Records and Reports.**

(1) **Location of Records.** Unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, all records required by these rules shall be kept within the State and shall be made available to the Commission or its authorized representatives at any time upon request.

(2) **Retention of Records.** All records required by these rules shall be preserved for the period of time specified in the current edition of the Federal Communications Commission's records retention schedule (Title 47), unless otherwise specified by the Commission.

→ SEE PART 42 (FC 526 IN CFR)

(3) **Records to be Made Available on Request.** Each tele-

phone utility shall maintain records of its operations in sufficient detail to permit review of its service performance, and such records shall be made available to the Commission upon request.

(4) **Reports.** Each telephone utility shall make either a verbal or written report promptly to the Commission of any specific occurrence or development which disrupts the service of a substantial number of its customers or which may impair the utility's ability to furnish service to 10% of local subscribers for more than 24 hours or 25% of its toll trunks during daily busy hours or toll isolation at any time.

(5) Data to be Filed with the Commission:

(a) **Tariffs.** Each telephone utility shall have its tariff on file with the Commission in accordance with the rules and regulations governing the filing of tariffs as prescribed by the Commission.

(b) **Exchange Maps.** Each telephone utility shall have on file with the Commission an exchange area boundary map for each of its exchanges within the State. Each map shall clearly show the boundary lines of the area which the telephone utility holds itself out to serve in connection with the exchange. Exchange boundary lines shall be located by appropriate measurement to an identifiable location where that portion of the boundary line is not otherwise located on section lines, waterways, railroads, roads, etc. Maps shall include location of highways, section lines, geographic township and range lines, railroads and waterways outside municipalities. Maps generally shall contain detail as shown on county highway maps. The map scale and other detail shall be shown as required by the Commission. Data associated with the exchange map shall be immediately available for public information at each business office for the area served by said office. Each telephone utility filing an original or revised map shall submit proof of notice of the proposed boundary to any other telephone utility adjoining the area in which a boundary line is to be established or changed.

(6) **Accident Reports.** Each utility shall file with the Commission a report of each fatal or disabling accident in connection with the operation of the utility's telephone plant. Prompt verbal notice of fatal accidents followed by a copy of Occupational Safety and Health Administration Report shall be given to the Commission.

(7) **Service Reports.** Each utility shall furnish to the Commission at such time and in such form as the Commission may require, the results of any tests, summaries or records. The utility shall also furnish the Commission with any information concerning the utility's facilities or operations which may be requested.

Authority: Ga. L. 1878-79, p. 125; 1907, p. 72; 1922, pp. 143, 144; 1964, p. 338; 1965, p. 283; 1973, pp. 677-681; 1975, Sec. 2, p. 406. **Administrative History.** Original Rule was filed on December 29, 1975, effective January 1, 1976, as specified by Ga. L. 1975, p. 411.

**515-12-1.03 Metering, Inspections and Tests.**

(1) **Provisions for Testing.** The telephone utility shall provide or have access to test facilities which will enable it to determine the operating and transmission capabilities of circuit and switching equipment, either for routine maintenance or for fault location.

(2) **Meter Reading Records.** When mechanical and/or electronic recording devices are used in connection with telecommunication service the meter reading data and related customer records from which the customer's bills are prepared shall show:

(a) Identifying number or means to determine readily the customer's name, address and service classification.

(b) Meter readings.

(c) Date of meter reading.

(d) Multiplier or constant if used.

(3) **Meter Reading Interval.** As nearly as practicable meters shall be read at intervals to correspond to customer billing periods.

(4) **Meter and Recording Equipment Test Facilities.**

(a) A telephone utility furnishing telecommunication service where local exchange billing is based on the number and/or duration of messages, shall provide the necessary facilities, instruments and equipment for testing its metering or recording equipment.

(b) The overall accuracy of the test equipment and test procedure shall be sufficient to enable test of meters and recording equipment within the requirements of these rules.

(5) **Meter and Recording Equipment Requirements.** All meters and/or recording devices used to record data and prepare customers' bills shall be in good mechanical and electrical condition, shall be accurately read, and shall not involve approximations. All meters and/or recording devices shall accurately perform the following:

(a) For message rate service, where timing the length of message is

not involved, the meter and/or recording device shall show the number of completed messages sent by the station which it is measuring.

(b) For message rate and/or toll service when in addition to recording the calls it is necessary to time the calls, the recording device shall show the number of calls and the chargeable time involved in each call and the station making such call. Where a meter is associated with the station making the call, the meter shall accumulate the number of message units used for these calls.

(c) Where the recording equipment provides coded information that is used to automatically prepare customer bills, accurate interpretation of such coded information is required.

(6) **Initial Test.** Every telephone meter and/or recording device shall be tested for accuracy when released for service.

(7) **As-Found Tests.** All meter and/or recording devices tested in accordance with these rules for routine or complaint shall be tested in their normal operating location and wiring prior to removal or adjustment.

(8) **Routine Tests.** The telephone utility shall perform periodic testing and maintenance of its controlling trunk equipment associated with the meters and/or recording devices to assure the integrity of their operation. Periodic testing and maintenance shall also be performed on meters and recording devices to assure accuracy in their operation.

(9) **Request Tests.** Upon request of any customer the telephone utility shall make a test of any meter and/or recording device related to his billing. Such requests should not be made more often than once every three months unless unusual circumstances exist.

(10) **Referee Tests.** Any customer, by request to the Commission, may have a test of any meter and/or recording device related to his billing, conducted by the telephone utility in the presence of a representative of the Commission.

(11) **Test Records.** A record of all meter and/or recording equipment tests and adjustments and data sufficient to allow checking of the results shall be recorded. Such record shall include the identifying number of the meter and or recording device; its type; the date and kind of test; and the results of each test.

Authority Ga. L. 1975, Sec. 2, p. 406. Administrative History. Original Rule was filed on December 29, 1975, effective January 1, 1976, as specified by Ga. L. 1975, p. 411.

#### 515-12-1-.04 Customer Relations.

(1) **Rate and Special Charges Information.** Upon the request of any customer or applicant, the telephone utility shall provide an explanation of the rates, charges, and provisions applicable to the service furnished or available to such customer or applicant, and shall provide any information and assistance necessary to enable him to obtain the most economical communications service conforming to his stated needs. Applicants for residential telephone service shall be advised as to alternate services available to meet their stated communications requirements. This information may include printed explanations of alternate services and rates. Correspondingly, the utility shall notify residential customers of any service connection charge to be applied to their bills prior to undertaking any action and shall provide an estimate of the initial billing for basic monthly service (including fractional monthly amounts) plus any other applicable charges.

(2) The customer shall be provided with an estimate of the charges where special charges not specifically set forth in a utility's tariff are levied on the basis of actual cost for such items as extraordinary construction, maintenance, or replacement costs of expenses, overtime work at the customer's request, and special installations, equipment and assemblies.

#### (3) Business Offices.

(a) Business offices shall be staffed to provide customers and others with convenient access to qualified personnel, including supervisory personnel where warranted, to provide information relating to services and rates, accept and process applications for service, explain charges on customers' bills, adjust charges made in error and to generally act as representatives of the utility. If one business office serves several communities, toll-free calling from such communities to that office shall be provided.

(b) Qualified personnel shall be instructed to be courteous, considerate, efficient and available to promptly serve those who contact the business office.

**(4) Customer Billing.**

(a) Bills to customers shall be typed or machine printed, rendered regularly, and shall contain a listing of all charges and the period of time covered by the billing. The local service charges may be shown as a single item even though they include extensions and other items for which a flat monthly charge is made. The telephone company shall provide the customer with a breakdown of local service charges upon request. Statements itemizing message toll charges, if applicable, shall be included in bills to customers, with the exception of coin telephone message toll charges, which will be provided upon customer request.

(b) In the event of a dispute between the customer and the utility respecting any bill, the utility may require the customer to pay the undisputed portion of the bill to avoid discontinuance of service for non-payment. The utility shall make such investigation as may be appropriate to the particular case, and report the result thereof to the customer. In the event the dispute is not reconciled, the company shall advise the customer that he may make application to the Commission for review and disposition of the matter.

(c) In the event the customer's service is interrupted other than by the negligence or willful act of the customer and it remains out of order for more than 24 hours (but not including Saturday and Sunday if part of the first 24 hours) after being reported or found to be out of order, upon request appropriate adjustments shall be made to the customer.

(5) **Public Information.** Access to the following information shall be made available at the business office upon request.

(a) Copies of all tariffs as described in Rule 515-12-1.02 applicable to the area served by the business office.

(b) Maps showing exchange, base rate area and zone (if applicable) boundaries in sufficient size and detail from which all customer locations can be determined and mileage or zone charges quoted.

(c) Publicly announced information as to the present and intended future availability of specific classes of service at an applicant's location.

(d) Publicly announced information concerning plans for major service changes in the area served by the business office.

(e) Information pertaining to service and rates as proposed in pending tariff or rate change filing.

(f) Copies of these telephone service rules.

Authority Ga. L. 1878-79, p. 125; 1907, p. 72; 1922, pp. 143, 144; 1964, p. 338; 1965, p. 283; 1973, pp. 677-681; 1975, Sec. 2, p. 406. **Administrative History.** Original Rule entitled "Customer Relations" was filed on December 29, 1975, effective January 1, 1976, as specified by Ga. L. 1975, p. 411.

**515-12-1-.05 Customer Deposits for Communication Services. Amended.**

(1) The Commission declares that it is in the public interest for each utility to fairly and indiscriminately administer a reasonable policy reflected by written regulations, in accord with these Rules, which will permit an applicant for service to establish, or an existing customer to reestablish, credit with the utility for the use of its service. The Commission further declares that when it is necessary for an applicant or customer to make a cash deposit to establish or reestablish credit in accordance with these Rules, the making of such deposit is in the public interest because it avoids, to the extent practicable, the creation of a burden arising from uncollectible bills which would have to be borne ultimately by all the utility's ratepayers. The Commission further declares that the essential ingredient in each utility's administration of deposit policy in accord with these Rules is its equitable and indiscriminate application to all applicants for service and customers throughout the service area without regard to the economic character of the area or any part thereof, and such deposit policy shall be predicated upon the credit risk of the individual without regard to the collective credit reputation of the area in which he lives.

(2) Each utility may require an applicant for service to satisfactorily establish credit which will be deemed established if:

(a) The applicant demonstrates that he is a satisfactory credit risk by appropriate means including, but not limited to, the production of substantive references which may be quickly and inexpensively checked by the utility; or

(b) The applicant has been a customer of the utility for a similar type of service within a period of twenty-four consecutive billings preceding the date of application and during the last twelve consecutive billings for that prior service has not had service discontinued for non-payment of bill or had more than one occasion in which a bill was not paid within the period prescribed by the reasonable regulations of the utility on file with the Commission; provided, that the average periodic bill for such previous service was equal to at least fifty per centum of that estimated for the new service; and provided further, that the