

The Florida LINK

The Newsletter of
Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.
Equipment Distribution Program

Spring/Summer 2002

Mission: To provide residents with access to the telecommunications network. And, to ensure residents receive quality and timely service.

Voice Carry-Over (VCO) Telephone

The "Read and Talk" Telephone

The **Voice Carry-Over (VCO)** phone allows a person with a hearing impairment to speak directly to another party when the call is placed through Florida Relay. The relay operator (OPR) types the other party's response, which then appears as readable text on the VCO screen.

The VCO may also be used to communicate with a Text Telephone (TTY) user.

Below are the major features of the phone. The numbers in the text match the numbers labeled on the phone.

1. **VCO Screen** Used to receive messages in the text mode.
2. **AC Power Indicator** Indicates your phone has power and can be used.
3. **Signal Indicator Light** Indicates someone is speaking on the other end of the line.
4. **TONE Slider** Slide button left or right to adjust sound frequency band and get clearest sound for you.
5. **HOLD** Press this button and return handset to the cradle to put phone on hold.

6. **RELAY #** Press this button to reach the relay service after you have programmed the phone.
7. **REL MGS** Press this button to request a VCO call when the operator (OPR) answers your call in text.
8. **AUTO ANS** Pick up the handset and press this button to turn on the answering machine for text messages only.
9. **PROG** Use this button in the text mode as a backspace key and correction. For instance, if

you make a mistake while dialing, press PROG to go back one space to erase the mistake. It is also used when programming memory buttons, the relay service number, and the emergency call button.

10. **SELECT** Use this button as the space bar in the text mode.
11. **MEMORY Buttons M1–M5** Use these buttons as one-touch dialing for frequently used numbers. (See *Programming Your VCO Telephone* on page 2.)

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About The Florida Link

The Florida Link is FTRI's newsletter—your source for news and information on your telephone equipment and resources. This newsletter is mailed to everyone who has FTRI equipment. Should you have a change of address or equipment needs, please call FTRI customer service numbers at 1-800-222-3448 (Voice) or 1-888-447-5620 (TTY).

Florida Telecommunications FTRI Relay, Inc.

1820 E. Park Ave., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Business Phone: 1-888-292-1950
Fax: (850) 656-6099

<http://www.ftri.org>

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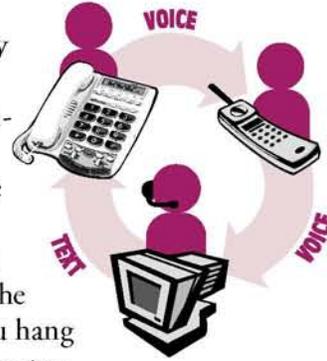
12. Ring Flasher Flashes to indicate the phone is ringing or that there is an unanswered call.

13. Emergency Button (Symbols) Use this button to make emergency calls and send emergency messages. **NOTE:** You must program in your personal information before you can use the button in an emergency. (See *Programming Your VCO Telephone*.)

14. AMPLIFY Use this button to turn the amplifier off or

on. It can amplify incoming voices from 0 to 30 decibels. Adjust the incoming volume by moving the sliding button on the right side of the phone. When you hang up, the amplifier automatically turns off.

15. REDIAL Press this button to automatically redial the last number you called.



16. VOL Adjust the incoming volume by moving the sliding button on the right side of the phone.

17. TONE/PULSE Dialing Selection Allows you to choose either pulse or tone dialing.

18. MEMORY b Use to program second number.

Programming Your VCO Telephone

Memory Buttons You may program two numbers into each button. To program the first number on a button:

- Lift the handset and press PROG.
- Enter the phone number you wish to program on the keypad.
- Press one of the memory buttons to store the number.
- Hang up.

To program the second number on a button:

- Lift the handset and press PROG.
- Enter the next phone number you wish to program on the keypad.

- Press MEMORY b and then the memory button.
- Hang up.

Emergency Call Button First, program in the emergency numbers.

- Lift the handset and press PROG and then EMERGENCY (Symbols).
- Enter your local emergency service number (or 911 if available), up to 14 digits. Press EMERGENCY to save.

Then, program in your personal information to be used in case of an emergency.

- Type your name (up to 30 letters) and press EMERGENCY to save. **Example:** Jane Doe

- Type your address (up to 45 letters) and press EMERGENCY to save.

Example: 444 Doe Road

- Type your home phone number (up to 14 digits) and press EMERGENCY to save.

Example: 850-333-3333

- Type your long distance carrier (up to 14 letters) and press EMERGENCY to save.

Example: Sprint

- Hang up.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

Here is a list of acronyms or abbreviations you will frequently see used in the newsletter. You may want to keep this list to refer to.

FTRI (Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.) Abbreviations:

- **ARS**—Audible Ring Signaler
- **ILA**—In-Line Amplifier
- **RDC**—Regional Distribution Center
- **TA**—Training Agency
- **TRS**—Tactile Ring Signaler
- **TTY**—Text Telephone, also known as a Telecommunications Device

for the Deaf or TDD

- **VCO**—Voice Carry-Over Phone
- **VCO/HCO/TTY**—Voice Carry-Over/Hearing Carry-Over/Text Telephone
- **VCPH**—Volume Control Phone for the Hearing Impaired
- **VCPS**—Volume Control Phone for the Speech Impaired
- **VRS**—Visual Ring Signaler

Florida Relay Abbreviations:

- **CD**—Could
- **CUL**—See you later
- **CUZ**—Because
- **GA**—Go Ahead

- **HD**—Hold
- **MTG**—Meeting
- **NBR**—Number
- **OIC**—Oh, I see
- **OPR**—Operator
- **PLS**—Please
- **Q**—Question mark
- **R**—Are
- **SHD**—Should
- **SK**—Good-bye
- **SKSK**—Stop keying
- **TMW**—Tomorrow
- **U**—You
- **UR**—Your
- **PC**—Personal Computer

Telecommunication Connection

Toll-free Access Numbers



Dial **711** to use the Relay anywhere or continue using

1-800-955-8771 (TTY/VCO) • 1-800-955-8770 (Voice)

1-800-955-1339 (ASCII) • 1-877-955-5334 (STS)

1-877-955-8773 (Spanish) • 1-877-955-8707 (French Creole) 8–2 a.m. daily

Relay Customer Service 1-800-676-3777 (English)

1-800-676-4290 (Spanish)

Filing a Complaint with Florida Relay

By Robert Giuntoli, Sprint Account Manager

When you are not satisfied with the service you get through Florida Relay, it is very important to file a complaint. The relay service processes thousands of relay calls every day and your feedback can help maintain high, quality standards.

There are several ways to file a complaint:

- The best way to file a complaint is during your relay call.
 - Anytime you experience a problem on a relay call, stay on the line and ask the relay operator to call a supervisor.
 - Explain to the supervisor your problem and the supervisor can go back in the screen and see the problem or errors

and handle the situation accordingly.

- The supervisor can show the relay operator the problem, do refresher training, or, if needed, take disciplinary action.

Remember: If you hang up, all of your conversation through relay will be erased automatically. We do not keep files of your relay conversations.

- The second best way to file a complaint is to call Relay Customer Service at 1-800-676-3777 (English) or 1-800-676-4290 (Spanish).
 - When you call Customer Service, please provide the relay operator's ID number, time,

date, and a brief description of the problem.

- The customer service representative will take your complaint and ask some questions and forward it to the supervisor where the relay operator works.

If you do not keep TTY printouts of your conversation, or use the relay with other types of telecommunications equipment, it is recommended that you write down the relay operator's ID number on a piece of paper before starting your conversation on the relay call.

It is very important that you share your feedback with the relay provider if you are not happy with the service. They want to hear from you.

Filing a Complaint through FPSC

To file a complaint about the relay service through the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC), you may call 1-800-342-3552 or visit the Web site at www.psc.state.fl.us.

When you get to FPSC's home page, click the Telecommunications icon on the left side of the page. Then select "File an Online Complaint" and follow these directions:

- On the left side of the page, click on the circle in front of the word Telecommunications.
 - Next, to the right of Telecommunications is a box that reads "Select Telecommunication Service." Click on the arrow on the right side of the box and choose Relay.
 - Then click the button that reads "Begin Online Complaint Process." This will take you to the page to file your complaint.
 - Be specific when describing the problem. Provide the relay operator's ID number, time, date, and a brief description of

the problem. Here is a list of the most common problems experienced during a relay call. You may want to use these descriptions in your complaint.

- ✓ Rings too long before OPR answers.
- ✓ Line is busy.
- ✓ OPR is rude.
- ✓ Too many misspelled words.
- ✓ OPR did not relay message correctly.

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<http://www.ftri.org>

OUTR Partners in Acti

Announcing the Business Partnership Program

Would you be upset if you tried to call a business and they kept hanging up on you? Thousands of Floridians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Impaired experience this frustration every day because many businesses do not understand how a telephone call through the Florida Relay works.

Business Partners who participated in the development of the Business Partnership Program and "Don't Hang Up . . . Do Business" relay training video.

Tallahassee

- AmSouth Bank
- Bill's Bookstore
- FSU, Educational Services Program

Jacksonville

- Stein Mart Corporation
- Baywash Carwash & Oil Lube
- Ritz Theatre & La Villa Museum
- Atkinson's Pharmacy
- White Hawk Pictures
- Rosenblum's Seafood Gourmet
- Fine European Watch and Clock Repair Shop

Welcome—Our Newest Business Partners

- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce
- Tampa Airport Hilton
- Flooring of America, Tallahassee
- West-Scott Inc., Tallahassee
- Forms Management, Inc., Tallahassee



Holloman, City President of AmSouth Bank of Tallahassee, as Donna Jean, Outreach Manager, looks on.

We're Always Looking for Relay Business Partners.

James Forstall, FTRI Executive Director, welcomes Darrin



Become a Florida Relay Business Partner

Become "Relay Friendly" and take advantage of our Business Partnership Program. This "Relay Friendly" training kit is designed to help you:

- Educate your employees on how to handle telephone calls through Florida Relay.
- Use the Florida Relay to call customers who have hearing- or speech-impairments.

We encourage you to let us know of businesses in your community that you frequent, or businesses that you would like to communicate with through the relay service. If you know of such a business, call us at 1-888-292-1950, ext. 232 or 233, or (850) 216-1659 and give us the name of the business, its location, and phone number so we can contact them.

What Are the Benefits?

- Builds positive community relations
- Provides opportunities to communicate with
- Provides telecommunications access for all
- Promotes independence and individual freedom
- Supports consumer interaction
- Creates a win-win situation for everyone

ion . . .



Can't Keep A Secret? Good!

Share the Good News . . . Using FTRI equipment can help make you more telephone independent.

This in-depth brochure is included in the Business Partnership Program and Training Kit. It includes the FTRI Equipment Distribution Program (EDP) application and quotes from satisfied recipients of the program who have discovered communication freedom and are able to make their own phone calls independently. Help us spread the good news, and help others take advantage of the FTRI EDP so they, too, can experience telephone independence. If you would like to receive a copy of this brochure/application or other printed materials, call us at 1-866-357-3529.



FTRI Online www.ftri.org

We also have a new Web site full of information about the Equipment Distribution Program, Florida Relay, the Outreach Program, Business Partners, and supporting information for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Impaired.



Let Freedom Ring . . .

. . . The Equipment Distribution Program video gives an overview of FTRI and its mission, as well as detailed information on all specialized telephones and ring signaling devices provided, at no charge, to qualifying residents of Florida who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Impaired. An example of how each piece of equipment works is shown and what the requirements are to receive the equipment.



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people
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**Florida
Telecommunications
FTRI Relay, Inc.**

<http://www.ftri.org>

Dialing 911 Can Save Your Life

When confronted with a life or death situation, most people don't hesitate to dial 911 for emergencies. Individuals who use relay services should not feel any different.

In an emergency, TTY users should **ALWAYS dial 911** instead of calling the relay service for their emergencies. Pat Welte, Duval County's 911 coordinator, says that calling through the relay slows down response time, thus immediate help could be delayed.

When a relay user calls through Florida Relay, that call is routed to a Florida Relay Call Center. If it is an emergency, the relay operator has to look up the emergency center number based on the caller's location and then call that number to request help.

"This really slows them down," Welte said.

Calling 911 directly is the fastest and safest method for TTY callers. Every emergency center is required by law to have TTY equipment within the agency. When a call comes through, it is immediately recognized by the emergency center and an Auto Answer responds to the caller with "911. GA." Callers

should then type their response, explaining the emergency situation to the 911 operator.

The procedures are slightly different in each county, but in most cases, the number and address of the caller is displayed to the 911 operator. In the event the caller is unable to communicate properly with the 911 operator or the call is disconnected, the 911 operator will call

Remember:

- Dial 911 for emergencies.
- Wait for the "911. GA." response.
- Remain calm and type in the emergency situation.
- Help will be on the way.

back to see if there is a problem with the phone line. If contact cannot be established, an emergency vehicle will be sent to the caller's home.

Welte stresses that TTY users are treated the same as regular callers. "We want them to remember to stay

calm and try to give us the right answers to our questions," she said. "We do train our operators and teach them how to handle TTY calls, so be patient with us and we'll get them help."

Welte suggests that hearing- or speech-impaired individuals may want to call their county 911 coordinator and verify that their name, telephone number, and address information is listed correctly. If the individual is not comfortable making the request, local Deaf Service Centers or Centers for Independent Living may be able to help. For a list of 911 coordinators, visit <http://www.state.fl.us/dms/e911/coordinators.html> or call the non-emergency number of the local communications center.

Another suggestion is to check with local hearing- and speech-impaired service centers to see if a tour of a 911 communications center can be arranged. "This is good so hearing- or speech-impaired persons can see the people who would be handling their 911 calls," Welte said. "That sometimes helped—on both sides."

FPSC complaint continued from pg. 3

- When you have finished filling out your complaint, click on "Next." You will be directed to a page where you fill out information, such as your name, address, and phone number. You must fill in every box that has an asterisk.
- Click "Next" to continue. This page gives you an opportunity to make sure that all the information you have entered is correct.
- If you have made a mistake on any of the items, click on "Make Corrections."
- When you are finished, click "Submit Complaint." The FPSC will investigate your complaint and respond to you in writing.

Florida Public Service Commission

The FPSC regulates Florida's utilities and is responsible for overseeing TASA. If you have a problem or question, you can call or write the FPSC for assistance.

TO CALL THE FPSC, dial 1-800-342-3552 (Voice) menu only. TTY users must call through Florida Relay using the same number. Once the menu starts, ask the relay operator (OPR) to press the number 2. Then wait for a person to answer your call to start your conversation.

IF WRITING, mail to FPSC, 2540 Shumard Oak Blvd., Tallahassee, FL 32399
 Fax number: 1-800-511-0809
 FPSC home page: <http://www.psc.state.fl.us>

From the Office

Message from the Executive Director



There are more than 1.6 million people with some degree of hearing loss in Florida. One of FTRI's missions is to provide specialized telecommunication equipment to enable these individuals to place and receive their own phone calls independently. Changes and new programs have recently been implemented at FTRI that will enable us to fulfill that mission more effectively.

I have one other change to report; in April we moved into new offices. FTRI's administrative office is now located at 1820 E. Park Avenue, Suite 101, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. The phone numbers for customer service

remain the same: 1-800-222-3448 (Voice) or 1-888-447-5620 (TTY). A new business number, 1-888-292-1950 has been added, if you need to discuss administrative issues or outreach needs.

We hope that these changes and products will help FTRI better serve our clients. As the administrator of TASA, we serve thousands of Floridians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Impaired each year. Since the inception of the program in 1991, we have served over 200,000 individuals statewide. Our goal is to increase the number of people served every year and eliminate (or reduce) the telecommunication barriers and frustrations you face every day.

James Forstall

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James Forstall
Executive Director



Pensacola Is Now a Regional Distribution Center (RDC)

And is open to serve you! Residents in the Pensacola area now have a place to go to receive FTRI equipment services. The **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)** is located on 945 W. Michigan Avenue, Suite 4, Pensacola, FL 32505. It is equipped with specialized telephones and ring signaling devices from FTRI to serve your needs.

The DHHS staff is ready to provide you with equipment distribution, maintenance, training, and outreach presentations as well as instruction on how to use Florida Relay. FTRI's Equipment and Outreach Program services are provided **at no charge**. For more information, you may contact the DHHS by calling (850) 433-7128 (Voice/TTY).

<http://www.ftri.org>

Regional Distribution Centers (RDC)

- Bradenton* (941) 758-2539 (V/TTY)
- Jacksonville (904) 399-8484 (V) (904) 398-6322 (TTY)
- Punta Gorda (941) 743-8347 (V) (941) 743-9286 (TTY)
- Cocoa Beach (321) 784-2010 (V) (321) 784-8777 (TTY)
- Lakeland (863) 686-3189 (V/TTY)
- Seminole* (727) 399-9983 (V/TTY)
- Coral Gables* (305) 668-4407 (V) (305) 668-3323 (TTY)
- Oakland Park (954) 731-7203 (V) (954) 731-7208 (TTY)
- Tallahassee (800) 222-3448 (V) (888) 447-5620 (TTY)
- Daytona Beach (386) 257-1700 (V) (386) 257-3600 (TTY)
- Pensacola (850) 433-7128 (V/TTY)
- West Palm Beach* (561) 802-3353 (V/TTY)
- Ft. Myers (239) 461-0334 (V) (239) 461-0438 (TTY)
- Port Richey* (727) 816-1314 (V/TTY) (800) 940-3323 (V/TTY)
- Winter Park (407) 623-1070 (V) (407) 623-1185 (TTY)

If you have questions or need equipment, you can contact the RDC nearest you. If you live in an area not serviced by an RDC, call FTRI Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

*Check for satellite offices.

Client Numbers
1-800-222-3448 (Voice)
1-888-447-5620 (TTY)



1820 E. Park Ave.
Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32301

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Announcing
FTRI Online

www.ftri.org

Florida Link is also available in
PDF format on our new Web site.

State Statistics

State of Florida Estimated Prevalence of Hearing Impairment—2000 (Ages 3 or Older)

- Florida has an estimated 1.6 million hearing-impaired residents.
Source: Kochkin, S. (December 2001). The VA and Direct Mail Spark Growth in Hearing Aid Market. *The Hearing Review*, 16–24, 63–65.



District	General Population	Hearing Impaired	Hard of Hearing	Deaf
Area 1	1,317,674	113,150	106,705	6,445
Area 2	2,440,061	209,846	197,888	11,958
Area 3	3,272,856	281,465	265,429	16,036
Area 4	2,985,956	256,792	242,161	14,631
Area 5	3,634,880	312,600	294,790	17,810
Area 6	2,332,951	200,634	189,203	11,431

Disclaimer: The above Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Florida Department of Education statistics represent the most recent available estimates. Figures from other sources may vary slightly.

FTRI Customer Service is committed to making sure all clients receive excellent service. If you have a concern or comment about any service you receive from a Regional Distribution Center, Training Agency, or the central office, please call the FTRI Customer Service number.

1-800-222-3448 (Voice) • 1-888-447-5620 (TTY) • Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.