

Standard Features

Rhode Island Relay provides the following features and services, which are listed in alphabetical order to ease the use in locating specific items.

Alpha–Numeric Dialing

If a relay user gives the CA an alpha-numeric number to dial (i.e. 1-800-HAMILTO), Rhode Island Relay CAs automatically translate and dial the appropriate 10 digit number.

Answering Machine Retrieval (Single-Line)

Rhode Island Relay provides this service in which messages from a voice or TTY answering machine or a single line telephone are retrieved by the CA. The caller requests Automatic Message Retrieval (AMR) or Single Line Answering Machine (SLAM) and plays the messages to the Communication Assistant by putting the handset near the speaker of the answering machine. The technology records any messages, enabling the Communication Assistant to capture the information and type or voice it back to the relay customer. Once the information is relayed to the caller and the caller disconnects, the recording is automatically erased.

Should Rhode Island Relay have to redial to an answering machine, voice mail, interactive voice messaging unit or any other type of recording system, for whatever reason, Rhode Island Relay does so without billing the customer for any subsequent long distance relay calls.

ASCII Split Screen

The relay platform used by Rhode Island Relay’s provider is compatible with ASCII software that makes use of “split screens.” Rhode Island Relay makes use of split screens for in which the CA’s typing is displayed in one window and the relay user’s typing is displayed in another window on the monitor of the CA workstation.

Automated Call Routing

During peak traffic periods, the switching equipment used by Rhode Island Relay’s provider automatically routes calls to a workstation located in another of their relay centers to ensure the required levels of service are always met. If one of the switching systems is down for any reason, the calls will automatically overflow to another switching system.

Automated Number Identification (ANI)

ANI is the telephone number of the originating party. Rhode Island Relay utilizes ANI technology on all of its incoming relay circuits. Rhode Island Relay’s provider's switching equipment recognizes this information and presents it to the CA workstation. ANI is used to determine call jurisdiction.

Automatic Connection Mode

The Automatic Connection Mode feature provides an automatic connection to the relay at the speed of the equipment used by the caller for all callers who have used Rhode Island Relay's Services at least one time before. When the first time callers reach Rhode Island's center, the "self-learning" database is updated with the caller's originating telephone number and the speed or call type at which the user connected to the center i.e. TTY, ASCII or Voice. After the first call, the center's equipment automatically connects at the correct speed whenever it is connected to that particular telephone number.

Average Speed of Answer

Rhode Island Relay's provider begins measuring Average Answer Time from the moment a relay call arrives at its relay switch (i.e. in the TRS center's network). As soon as Rhode Island Relay provider's equipment accepts the call from the LEC and the public switched network delivers the call to the TRS center, Rhode Island Relay starts its call detail record process to capture answer time data. Rhode Island Relay **answers** eighty-five (85%) of all relay calls within ten (10) seconds from the time the call enters the TRS system during all times of the day by any method which results in the caller's call immediately placed, not put in a queue or on hold. Abandoned calls are included in this daily answer performance calculation.

Background Noises

Background noise is anything heard by the CA during a relay call which would normally be known to a hearing person. The TTY user is continually informed of what is going on throughout the call. Rhode Island Relay puts this type of information in parentheses.

Rhode Island Relay also provides tone of voice information when it has a significant impact on the content, context or intent of the relay call.

Carrier of Choice

Rhode Island Relay's customer profile database, based on the relay users' ANI, provides automatic connection to the carrier of choice (AT&T, Sprint, MCI, etc.) for both interlata and intralata calls made by the relay user in the same manner that voice users have access to preferred carriers.

Cellular/Wireless Access

This feature allows relay users to access relay via cellular phones. Rhode Island Relay's call processing for relay cellular calls ensures that relay users will not experience billing problems. Rhode Island Relay automatically treats all wireless telephone calls that do not allow direct billing to the ANI as a local call. This prevents the wireless telephone user from having to make alternate billing arrangements.

CA Gender ID

With this feature Rhode Island Relay's macros automatically identify the CA's gender with the TTY greeting.

CA Gender Preferences

Upon request, Rhode Island Relay's Communication Assistants will switch a call to another Communication Assistant who is of the gender requested by the caller. That gender CA is retained for the user throughout the relay call. Customers can also profile their preferred gender and their call will automatically route to their preferred CA gender, if a CA of that gender is available.

CA in-call Replacement

As a matter of practice, Rhode Island Relay does not change Communication Assistants during a call. This exceeds the FCC rule that requires a CA to stay with the call for a minimum of 10 minutes or 15 minutes for STS calls. Even at the end of shifts, over lunch hours and other breaks, Rhode Island Relay CAs stay with a call until it is completed. Rhode Island Relay only substitutes a CA if obscenity is directed to the CA, a perceived conflict of interest exists or another major emergency exists. A change never takes place until either the calling or called party has completed their part of the conversation (typed or stated GA).

CA Typing Speed

All of Rhode Island Relay's Communication Assistants must type at least 60 words per minute. Rhode Island Relay subtracts all errors to calculate typing speed. This ensures not only fast typists but also ACCURATE typists. The average typing speed of Rhode Island Relay's Communication Assistants is 68.9 wpm with 98% accuracy.

Courtesy Messages

Rhode Island Relay supplies a courtesy message after three rings, to inform callers that they have reached Rhode Island Relay. This courtesy message is transmitted in TTY and voice. Rhode Island Relay's courtesy message follows: "You have reached the relay. Please hold for a CA." If the call has not been answered after 15 seconds, the message repeats as follows, "Please hold for a CA".

Customer Profile Database

Rhode Island Relay users may indicate how their calls are handled by including their calling preferences in their Customer Profile. This feature allows Rhode Island Relay to customize the relay service for each relay user. Once activated, the customer profile appears on the CA's screen each time the relay user calls the relay so that the CA can properly process the call according to the user's preferences.

Rhode Island Relay users do not have to use their preset preferences on every relay call. These preferences can be used at the discretion of the relay user on each relay call.

Customer Profile Security

Customer profiles are based on ANI or a pre-established ten digit number. This provides a very high level of security and keeps all confidentiality practices intact. The customer profile database can only be accessed internally (the database resides on site and is part of Rhode Island Relay's relay platform) and a password and PIN system is used to further secure the data. With this password, the relay user can request changes to the profile at any time.

Rhode Island Relay Customer Profile Information:

Customer Information

Profile Field	Information Purpose
Name	First & Last Name: used for identification purposes.
Address	Street Address, City, State & ZIP Information used for further contact needs (account verification, service updates, etc.) and emergency services.
E-mail Address	Information used for further contacting client.
Phone Number	Used for profile identification when placing a call, as well as follow up.
Mailing List	Allows the user to choose to be included in the State Relay or Hamilton Relay mailing lists to receive newsletters and other important information regarding Telecommunications Relay Services.

Personalized Features

Profile Field	Information Purpose
Profile Security	Password: Secret Word consisting of 4-10 letters and/or numbers. Choosing a Password ensures the Relay User is the only person who can make changes to their profile.
Multi-User Feature	PIN: Secret number 4 digits long. A PIN allows Relay user to have their own profile if more than one relay user living in their household.
Remote Profile Feature	PIN: Allows Relay user to access their customer profile when using the relay from any telephone or web-based computer, in any location.
Language Type	Allows User to select their preferred language. Options include English and Spanish.
Preferred Permanent Connection Mode	Call Handling Options: Allows Relay users to specify how they want their calls answered by the relay. Options include: TTY, VCO, HCO, ASCII, STS, Spanish, Telebraille and Voice.

Profile Field	Information Purpose
Preferred CA Gender	Allows Relay users to specify the gender of the CA that the User prefers for each call.
Long Distance Company	Carrier of Choice: Allows Relay users to select their preferred long distance provider.
Translator	When the translator option is selected, the CA will translate ASL to English and English to ASL for both the TTY user and the voice user unless given other instruction.
No Abbreviations	By choosing “No Abbreviations”, the CA will type word for word, without using abbreviations.
Slow Type Buffer	Hamilton’s slow type buffer will allow the CA to type at a normal pace while sending the text to the relay user at rates of text in increments of 5 words per minute. Hamilton CAs have the ability to turn this feature on or off on a per call basis.
Spell Check Turned Off	By turning spell check off, the Relay user will see mistakes or misspelled words. Spell check is turned on automatically.
Speed Dialing	Relay users may choose up to 50 numbers they would like programmed for speed dial. When a Relay user makes a call to a number on their speed dial list, they first connect to the CA and just tell the CA, “pls call Mom”.
Customizable Greetings	Allows Relay users to customize how the CAs identify relay to the person they are calling; for example, using their first name in the greeting. The profile also allows the relay user to choose to have the CA never explain relay or never identify the relay to any person called.
Restrictions	Allows the Relay user to select the types of calls to be blocked from their telephone including: long distance, 900, International, Directory assistance, toll-free and Operator assistance calls.
Background Noise	Allows the Relay user to choose whether or not to receive background noise information during their call.
Tone of Voice	Allows the Relay user to choose whether or not to receive voice descriptions.
Long Hold Times	When this feature is selected, the CA will continue to stay on hold but will not ask the Relay user repeatedly if they would like to continue the call.

Profile Field	Information Purpose
User reads slowly	DBS user reads slowly so patience is required
CA speak slowly	Request that CA talk slowly to patience is required
STS Contacts	STS Relay users can add contact information and hours of availability at each location so that a hearing user can ask for the STS user by name and be automatically connected with them in their registered location
STS Messages	Allows STS Relay users to dictate messages. CAs can save the message in the user's profile for up to 2 hours so that the STS user doesn't have to repeat the information.
Abbreviate Auto Message	This allows the CA to abbreviate messages when typing recordings or IVRs, allowing the User to receive a summarized recorded message.
Retain Information	This allows the retention of information from one inbound call for subsequent calls.
Open Line/Mute Transmission of STS User	This allows the User to communicate with the CA privately without the voice user hearing the conversation.
Specific instructions to STS CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before dialing, User prefers that the CA to asks: "Shall I tell the party who is calling?" • User prefers that CA confirm call handling preferences before dialing requested number • User prefers for callers to ask to call them by name rather than by telephone number.
Standard message to leave on answering machine	This allows users to identify caller by name, request call back, specify call back number, and provide the relay telephone number.
Notes	Allows the Relay user to provide CAs with additional information they would like included or known for every call.

Guide

Profile Field	Information Purpose
Guide for Understanding your Customer Profile	A guide is included to help the Relay user understand the purpose of each section or to better understand how to complete the profile to best meet their needs.

Transfer of Database Information

Rhode Island Relay’s provider will transfer all customer profile database information to a new TRS provider at the termination of the contract. Rhode Island Relay’s provider will transfer this data in a usable format within 60 days prior to its last day of service.

Remote/Multi-User Profile Feature

Rhode Island Relay’s Remote/Multi-User Profile allows relay users to access their profile from any phone or web-based computer, and through any type of relay service, whether traditional relay or Internet Relay.

Rhode Island Relay users simply give their telephone number (or pre-established ten digit number) and PIN number to the CA, to permit the CA to view the customer’s pre-selected preferences. This feature is of great benefit to customers who have more than one relay user living in the household. With Rhode Island Relay’s Remote/Multi-User Profile, each person can establish his/her own profile. Users who travel are always able to access their profile from anywhere.

Customer Service

Rhode Island Relay recognizes the importance of responsive customer care and places a large focus on responding to the needs of our customers. Rhode Island Relay's Customer service department is very responsive to the needs of its customers and works to resolve all customer issues in a timely manner. Customer Service instructs relay users on how to place relay calls, answers questions about any changes that have been made, assists relay users with billing questions, performs equipment testing, provides a variety of referral numbers to state organizations and schedules one-on-one outreach visits for training purposes or larger outreach activities. Rhode Island Relay’s Customer Service is available 24 hours a day to ensure customers have constant access to customer support. Rhode Island Relay has a separate toll-free number for Customer Service

Deaf/Blind Pacing/Slow Typing Requests/Slow Type Buffer

Rhode Island Relay’s slow type buffer allows the CA to type at a normal pace while sending the text to the relay user at rates of text in increments of 5 words per minute. Rhode Island Relay CAs have the ability to turn this feature on or off on a per call basis.

Dialed Number Verification

Rhode Island Relay verifies the number to be dialed by voicing it back to the voice user or typing it back to the TTY user (Rhode Island Relay uses a hotkey to do this so there is no CA intervention). In the same hotkey, Rhode Island Relay notifies the relay user if they are dialing a local number or toll number. The relay user will see “Dialing Toll (ATT) XXX-XXX-XXXX”. Both of these features ensure that the correct number is dialed and gives the relay user an opportunity to notify the CA if the carrier information is incorrect.

Rhode Island Relay’s Communication Assistants verify all pertinent information, including the number to be dialed, names, proper names, account numbers and dollar amounts.

Directory Assistance

This feature gives all relay users access to directory assistance services via the relay. Rhode Island Relay processes directory assistance requests in the same manner as any other relay requests. Upon receiving the area code from the relay user, the CA dials the correct area code plus 555-1212. When reaching the directory assistance operator, the CA identifies herself/himself and asks for the city and state the user has given while at the same time keeping the relay user informed. When the correct number has been obtained the call is handled as a regular relay call.

The relay user can pick which carrier they want to use for directory assistance. The relay user’s carrier of choice will bill for directory assistance calls at their tariffed rate. With presubscription, the customer’s carrier performs all billing.

Emergency Assistance

Rhode Island Relay provides emergency assistance to all relay users. The key to providing the best service in emergency situations is to maintain an updated list of Public Emergency Service Answering Point numbers (i.e. 911 centers). Hamilton accomplishes this through two mechanisms to ensure that relay users are connected to the appropriate PSAP: 1) through the use of Intrado’s 9-1-1 infrastructure and 2) through the PSAP database maintained by Hamilton.

Emergency Numbers

Rhode Island Relay users can add local emergency numbers to their speed dialing list on their Customer Profile. This feature can save valuable time when time is of the essence. A relay user could simply type call Fire or call 911 and the CA will automatically dial the appropriate PSAP. Rhode Island Relay encourages all relay users to call 911 direct.

Enhanced Modems

The modems used by Rhode Island Relay’s provider can auto-detect the difference between ASCII and Baudot signals within the same modem so that each call is connected

correctly. These modems support ASCII connections and have faster ASCII detection capability (3 seconds).

Error Corrections/Abbreviation Expansion

To increase typing speed and reduce conversation time, Rhode Island Relay utilizes an Error Correction program which automatically checks words to be transmitted against our dictionary of commonly misspelled words. If a misspelled word is found, the Spell Checking software automatically corrects the word before it is sent to the TTY users. While the software automatically corrects any typographical errors of commonly misspelled words, proper nouns are not affected.

The spelling database is continually updated with new words as needed. Rhode Island Relay users have seen the benefits as fewer typing errors are seen by the TTY user. This is one more way Rhode Island Relay continues to bring quality service to its relay customers.

Rhode Island Relay also offers a feature that allows CAs to use common abbreviations which are automatically expanded to the entire word in the transmitted text, which speeds up the transmission of the call.

Rhode Island Relay users can specifically request to not use Spell Check or to not expand abbreviations via a customer profile.

Hearing Carryover (HCO)

This feature allows people who have difficulty speaking to place and receive calls. The HCO caller hears the communication directly from their caller without such transmission being processed by the CA. The CA then voices any conversation typed by the HCO user to the other party.

Rhode Island Relay allows HCO users to utilize both TTY modes, acoustic mode and direct connect mode. A variety of HCO call types are also available through Rhode Island Relay.

HCO-HCO

This service allows two HCO users to contact each other through the relay. Rhode Island Relay provides HCO to HCO service where the CA voices to both parties, preventing the HCO users from having to read the other party's conversation.

HCO Permanent Branding

Rhode Island Relay provides this service through its Customer Profile. Customers can choose to be automatically connected to HCO without any CA intervention at the workstation.

HCO-TTY and TTY-HCO

This feature allows HCO users to contact TTY users (or vice versa) via the relay. The CA will voice the TTY user's typed conversation to the HCO user. The TTY user receives the HCO user's typed conversation directly from the HCO user.

HCO with Privacy

Rhode Island Relay provides HCO with Privacy upon the customer's request which gives privacy for the standard telephone user talking with an HCO user. The CA is not able to hear the hearing person's conversation, which goes directly to the speech disabled HCO user. The CA then voices any conversation typed by the HCO user to the other party.

Inbound International

Rhode Island Relay provides inbound International calling in which the relay user pays to place a call from an International location to the relay center. Rhode Island Relay then places the outbound call to a destination in the United States free of charge and relays the conversation for them. Inbound International calls are billed to the Interstate TRS Fund.

Intercept Messages

Rhode Island Relay's system provides automated overflow to its other centers which in most instances eliminates the need for intercept messages. However, if the traffic cannot be rerouted for any reason such as multiple circuit failures, the callers will be notified with the appropriate type of intercept messages, which is transmitted in TTY and voice. Minutes of use attributed to accessing intercept messages are not included in the billable minutes.

Local Exchange Carrier (LEC) Calling Services

Rhode Island Relay's provider has made its relay service compatible with the network used by telephone companies to provide LEC calling services in a truly functionally equivalent manner. The relay user does not experience any additional costs except to the extent that a relay user is billed for enhanced services by the relay user's LEC (not the TRS provider) or that a three-way call results in two toll calls. Rhode Island Relay does not charge the relay user for any special calling services.

- True Caller ID (SS7)
Rhode Island Relay's provide true Caller ID service through SS7 signaling where the actual information of the calling party (not the relay center number) appears on the Caller ID box. Rhode Island Relay provides this information on all call types and on all carriers. Rhode Island Relay passes, sends and receives calling line identification information, **including blocking information** from all users calling through the relay service.
- Caller ID (CID) Per Line (Global) Block/CID Per Call Block
Calling line information is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC. All forms of Caller ID Blocking (Global or per call blocking) pass through on a

per call basis with no relay intervention. Because Rhode Island Relay's provider makes use of true SS7 technology, rather than ISDN, all forms of calling line identification information and blocking features purchased by the LEC are passed through with no relay intervention. Because Rhode Island Relay can pass, send and receive calling line identification information, a whole host of other features are available including:

- Call Screening (Call Rejection) (Call Block)
Call Screening is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC in order to prevent nuisance or unwanted calls. The relay user will simply program his/her phone to block all calls from his/her selected list of phone numbers. If someone calls through relay from one of these numbers on the list, the caller receives a pre-recorded announcement stating the caller is not accepting calls at this time, which the relay will type or voice to the originating caller. Calls from other numbers are not blocked.
- Call Acceptance
Call Acceptance is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC. Call Acceptance lets a relay user block all calls except those from his/her list of special phone numbers. A relay user can add, delete or change numbers on his/her list at any time. This feature is often used in order to prevent nuisance and solicitation calls. If someone calls through relay from a number not on the list, the caller receives a pre-recorded announcement stating the caller is not accepting calls at this time, which the relay will type or voice to the originating caller. Calls from numbers not on the list are blocked.
- Anonymous Call Rejection
Anonymous Call Rejection is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC in order to prevent receiving calls that are "blocked" or "private." Relay users who do not want to receive calls from parties who have blocked their Caller ID information can make use of this feature. Callers who have blocked their Caller ID information will receive a recording indicating that the called party is not accepting calls at this time which the Communication Assistant will either voice or type to the originating caller.
- Preferred Call Forwarding
Preferred Call Forwarding is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC. Relay users create a list of numbers that they wish to forward to a new telephone number. All other callers do not forward to the new telephone number. Relay users can add, delete or change numbers on their call forwarding list.
- Unique Flash
Unique Flash is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC. Relay users create a list of numbers with their own distinctive flash (ring). If someone calls through relay that is calling from a number with a distinctive flash associated with

it, the called relay party will hear or see the distinctive flash. The unique flash indicates it's one of the special callers from the individual's list.

- Call Forwarding
Preferred Call Forwarding is provisioned on the relay customer's line by the LEC. Rhode Island Relay users create a list of numbers that they wish to forward to a new telephone number. All other callers do not forward to the new telephone number. Rhode Island Relay users can add, delete or change numbers on their call forwarding list.
- Call Trace
Because all of Rhode Island Relay's network is based on SS7 connectivity, customers who have purchased Call Trace through their LEC can make use of Call Trace through relay, which works without relay intervention.
- Last Call Return
Because Rhode Island Relay provides true Caller ID service through SS7 signaling where the actual information of the calling party (not the relay center number) appears on the Caller ID box, the customer is able to see the telephone number of their last incoming call. To return the call, the customer simply calls relay and gives the CA the number on the Caller ID to call back. If the customer does not have Caller ID, Rhode Island Relay provides last call return within the duration of the same inbound call.
- Three-Way Calling
If a three-way call is desired and three-way calling is available from the LEC and the customer has purchased this feature from his/her LEC, the customer can use the feature to either tie the third party directly into the conversation or to tie the third party in by making a second call to the relay center.
- TRS Conference Calling
In addition to three-way calling, Rhode Island Relay also supports conference calling. The customer requests a relayed conference call and the text based relay user gives the number to dial and any access codes required to join the conference call.

Local/Extended Area Service

The provider for Rhode Island Relay has obtained the necessary information (NPA/NXX) from all Rhode Island LECs to build a database to identify the difference between local, EAS and intrastate calls. This database notifies the CA if the call being placed is a local call (including areas of EAS). If it is a local call, no billing arrangements are necessary and the data is recorded to calculate session minutes only.

Machine Recording Capabilities

The recording function allows the Communication Assistant to record a voice announcement and then play back the message at a speed controlled by the Communication Assistant. The CA informs the relay user through the use of a hot key on the CA's terminal that a recording has been reached, followed by another hot key stating (CA HERE WOULD YOU LIKE COMPLETE MSG TYPED OR HOLD FOR A DEPT OR LIVE PERSON Q).

If a caller requests a department or live person, the CA types, "HLDING FOR DEPT/PERSON" and presses the appropriate option when the recording prompts.

If a caller requests listening to the complete message, the CA sends a hot key that states, "COLLECTING INFO PLS HLD" and the CA continues to collect the recording.

The message is retained for the length of the call. This prevents the caller from having to call back several times to get the entire message. Once the originator of the call disconnects, the recording is automatically deleted from the system. Keys on the keyboard are used to control the speed of the recording ensuring the message is transmitted accurately by the CA. This makes the recording function very easy for Communication Assistants to use.

Pagers

Rhode Island Relay handles relay calls that involve pagers and beepers. There is no difference in Rhode Island Relay's call processing for text initiated calls made through pagers.

Regionally Directed Toll-Free Numbers

Rhode Island Relay allows access to regionally directed toll-free numbers. Because Rhode Island Relay passes true Caller ID information, the caller's ANI will reflect a Rhode Island number which will result in the call being routed to the correct state or regional location.

Regionally Restricted Toll-Free Numbers

Rhode Island Relay's service allows access to restricted 800 numbers and other special prefixes.

Reverse Two-Line HCO

Two-line HCO works in the reverse when a voice user places a call to a two-line HCO user through relay. It is then called Reverse Two-line HCO.

Reverse Two-Line VCO

Two-line VCO works in the reverse when a voice user places a call to a two-line VCO user through relay. It is then called Reverse Two-line VCO.

Spanish to Spanish Relay and Spanish to English Translation

Rhode Island Relay provides Spanish Relay services.

Rhode Island Relay provides Interstate Spanish to Spanish, meeting the FCC requirement. Rhode Island Relay's provider bills all Interstate minutes to the Interstate TRS Fund.

In addition, Rhode Island Relay provides Intrastate Spanish to Spanish, Spanish to English and English to Spanish call handling.

The Rhode Island Spanish 800 number is associated with a separate queue for Spanish 800 calls which are directed to a separate queue so that calls flow immediately to Spanish speaking CAs. If a relay user calls another 800 number, Rhode Island Relay has the ability to transfer the call to a Spanish speaking CA. In addition, relay users can select "Spanish" as an option on Rhode Island Relay's Customer Profile. This information is presented to the CAs at the workstation for proper call processing.

CAs fluent in the Spanish language are scheduled for all shifts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Rhode Island Relay processes all the same call types on its Spanish lines as it does on its English voice and TTY lines, including TTY, VCO, HCO, ASCII, STS and 900 calls.

Speech Difficulty Indicator

HCO users can indicate in the customized greeting section of their profile that they have difficulty speaking. For example, when an HCO user places a call to a TTY user, the CA will inform the TTY user that the caller has difficulty speaking. An indicator will appear in the Notes section of the CA workstation. CAs will uniformly recognize an "s" typed by a TTY user at the beginning of a call to indicate that the caller has difficulty speaking.

Speech to Speech (STS)

Rhode Island Relay's STS service allows individuals who have difficulty speaking to use his/her own voice or a speech synthesizer when using the relay. Specially trained CAs process Speech to Speech calls. Rhode Island Relay gives STS users access to the same profile and all of the features contained within that profile which are currently available to other relay users.

Speech to Speech/Spanish

Rhode Island Relay's STS service is also available in Spanish. Relay user's can select "Spanish" and "STS" as an option on Rhode Island Relay's Customer Profile.

Speech to Speech/Voice Carry Over (VCO)

STS/VCO is designed for people who are hard of hearing or Deaf and have difficulty speaking. The relay user can make or receive phone calls through the relay through a Speech to Speech CA using his/her own voice or voice synthesizer and read everything said by the voice caller on a TTY or VCO telephone.

STS to other TRS Communication Modes

Rhode Island Relay also allows STS users to place calls to people who use a TTY or other TRS communication modes such as VCO, HCO or to another person who has difficulty speaking. Speech to Speech can be used a variety of ways:

- Two hearing individuals, with the CA repeating the words of the person who has difficulty speaking.
- Two individuals who have difficulty speaking with the CA repeating both persons' words.
- A VCO user and a hearing person, with the CA repeating the words of the VCO user if the hearing person does not understand the user's speech and with the CA typing what is said by the hearing person to the VCO user.
- A TTY user and a person who has difficulty speaking without a TTY, with the CA typing the words of the person who has difficulty speaking to the TTY user.
- Hearing Carry Over with the person who has difficulty speaking typing what they would like to say and the Communication Assistant voicing it to the hearing user.
- Hearing Carry Over in combination with Speech to Speech.

Three-Way Calling

In compliance with the FCC Order released on June 17, 2003, Rhode Island Relay provides three-way calling capability, in which the customer (if the customer has purchased this feature from his/her LEC) can use this feature to either tie the third party directly into the conversation or to tie the third party in by making a second call to the relay center.

Toll Discounts

Rhode Island Relay's Customer Service Representatives discuss carrier of choice with relay users and direct them to other telephone numbers to access more information from particular carriers. Rhode Island Relay maintains a list of participating long distance carriers and telephone numbers and helps the customer shop for the best toll discounts through relay that match their calling style.

Transfer Gate Capabilities

If a relay user calls 711 or the TTY relay access number and requests another service (such as STS, Spanish, etc.), Rhode Island Relay has the ability to transfer the call to the appropriate workstation for call processing.

TTY to TTY (Call Release)

Rhode Island Relay processes TTY to TTY calls when it is necessary to go through a voice switchboard first or if the originating TTY user is using a calling card that is accessed by calling an 800 number first. Once the CA reaches a compatible TTY user when placing a relay call, Rhode Island Relay gives the calling party the option to communicate independently of the relay function. If the calling party agrees to do so, the CA will drop out of the call. If the call is a long distance call, the call will be billed as a normal relay call (i.e. the relay user's carrier of choice).

Rhode Island Relay provides a true call release function to satisfy the FCC requirement which removes the workstation from the call.

TTY to TTY (Call Release)

Rhode Island Relay processes TTY to TTY calls for Relay users, in which the CA remains on the line until both parties have disconnected.

Turbo Code

Rhode Island Relay provides Turbo Code which is a proprietary alternate protocol developed by Ultratec. This protocol is faster than Baudot (Turbo Code is similar to "real-time") and does not have the limitation of ASCII. Turbo Code also allows for "interrupt" capability while one party is still typing. The modems used by Rhode Island Relay auto-detect the end-user's equipment for Turbo Code. If Turbo Code is found, Rhode Island Relay automatically connects in "Turbo Code" to the relay user. Rhode Island Relay users are able to automatically connect "Turbo Code" on every relay call type.

Rhode Island Relay has an automatic identification of connection speed system within its relay platform. This feature provides automatic connection at the speed, including Turbo Code, of the equipment used by the caller for any caller who has used Rhode Island's Relay Services at least one time before. Our switch has a "self-learning" database which is updated the first time callers reach our center with their originating telephone number and the speed at which they connected to our center.

Two-Line HCO

To place a two-line HCO call, the ASCII/TTY user calls relay, connects with a CA and requests that the CA make a call to their voice (second) line. The relay user must have two telephone lines and 3-way calling. Once connected in voice, the relay user conferences in the third party via the voice line (the party they want to speak with). Now, the CA only voices what the HCO user types. The CA is virtually invisible to the voice customer, allowing for a two-way uninterrupted conversation to take place.

Two-Line HCO/Speech to Speech

This option works the same as a 2-Line HCO call but is processed by a specially trained STS CA. The 2-Line/STS user can choose between voicing their own conversation or having the CA voice the conversation for them. If the HCO user chooses to voice his/her conversation and becomes tired or is having difficulty being understood, he/she can type his/her part of the conversation and call on the CA to “re-voice” as needed. The HCO user can switch between voice and typing at any time during the call.

Two-Line VCO

Two-line VCO capability allows a VCO user to have a more interactive conversation. By using two telephone lines the caller, if they have some hearing available, can listen to their conversation on one line while receiving typed text from a CA on the other line, thus creating a more natural flow of conversation.

To place a two-line VCO call, the ASCII/TTY user calls relay, connects with a CA and requests that the CA make a call to their voice (second) line. The relay user must have two telephone lines and 3-way calling. Once connected in voice, the customer conferences in the third party (the party they want to speak with). Now, the CA only types what the third party says. The CA is virtually invisible to the voice customer, allowing for a two-way uninterrupted conversation to take place.

Voice Carryover (VCO)

Voice Carryover (VCO) provides people who can communicate with their voice but have difficulty hearing, the ability to place or receive calls. The VCO caller speaks his or her own message directly to the caller without such transmission being processed by the CA. The CA then types any conversation spoken to the VCO user so it can be read on the TTY. Rhode Island Relay allows relay users to request VCO services without the normal TTY transmission that is typically required. A VCO user can connect voice and say “VCO” and Rhode Island Relay connects the call. Voice users do not hear tones during a VCO call.

Rhode Island Relay allows VCO users to utilize both TTY modes, acoustic mode and direct connect mode. A variety of VCO call types are also available through Rhode Island Relay.

VCO-HCO and HCO-VCO

Rhode Island Relay provides this service to VCO and HCO users who call another HCO or VCO user through the relay. The VCO user voices his/her conversation directly to the HCO user. The HCO user’s typing goes directly to the VCO user.

VCO Permanent Branding

Rhode Island Relay provides this service through its customer profile. Customers who always want to connect VCO are automatically connected to VCO without any CA intervention at the workstation.

VCO-TTY and TTY-VCO

Rhode Island Relay provides this service in which VCO users can call a TTY user (or vice versa) through the relay. The VCO user voices his/her conversation which the CA types to the TTY user. The TTY user types his/her conversation directly to the VCO user.

In addition, Rhode Island Relay provides VCO to TTY or ASCII services as well as all other combination of call types involving VCO.

VCO-VCO

This service allows two VCO users to contact each other through the relay. Rhode Island Relay provides VCO to VCO service where the CA types to both parties, saving the VCO users from having to type their part of the conversation.

VCO with Privacy

Rhode Island Relay provides VCO with Privacy upon request in which the CA will not hear the caller speaking through the relay and will only type voiced responses back to the VCO user.

Voice Gender ID

Rhode Island Relay's CAs indicate to the TTY user the gender of the non-TTY relay user at the beginning of the call – (M) Male, (F) Female or (Child) Child. If the CA is absolutely not sure, the CA will type (?).

Rhode Island Relay's CAs also indicate to the TTY user when another voice person has become involved in the call. Rhode Island Relay identifies the gender of the new party involved in the call immediately.

Voice to Voice Call Release

Rhode Island Relay provides Voice to Voice call release which allows a hearing user to connect to another hearing user via the Relay. This usually happens inadvertently. Rather than blocking the call, this feature allows the CA to be "released" from the telephone line without triggering a disconnection between two hearing users. The CA releases the call after the CA connects the originating hearing caller to the hearing called party.

1010 Numbers

Rhode Island Relay offers 1010 dialing through relay. This service is functionally equivalent to using 1010 services when not placing calls through relay.

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All services available from Rhode Island Relay are accessible through 711 including Speech to Speech. Rhode Island Relay meets all the same general requirements set forth for all relay calls when 711 is dialed rather than an 800 number.

Pay-Per-Call Services

The relay platform used by Rhode Island Relay's provider allows relay users to access intrastate and interstate 800, 900 and pay-per-call services in which the company providing the service bills the end-user directly. Rhode Island Relay's provider has established the necessary trunking to the carriers participating in relay equal access so that the carrier can bill directly for this call.

A relay user calls the TTY relay number and gives the 800 or 900 number to the CA. The CA places the call as usual and begins relaying the call. On all 900 numbers, Rhode Island Relay CAs type the dollar amount per minute associated with the call to the TTY user and asks him/her if he/she want to continue the call before charges begin. This is the point in which callers can disconnect without being charged. The calling party is billed for the call by the 900-service provider or the carrier, whichever is appropriate.

Because no 900 blocking information is automatically passed to Rhode Island Relay's provider from the LEC, the provider relies on customer profile data as the only resource for this information. However, if a LEC were to contact the provider with this information, that resource would be used to block 900 access.

Customers who do not want 900 calls made from their telephone line through the relay, can complete a customer profile form. The customer profile contains an option that will block 900 calls made through the relay. This prevents anyone from calling a 900 number from that particular telephone line. If someone tries to call a 900 number through the relay from a line that has a block on it, the CA will receive notification at the workstation that this call is blocked and will not be able to place the call.