

Call Splashing: Long-Distance Calling from a Public Phone

What is call splashing

When you place a long-distance call from a public phone (a payphone, hotel, or airport phone, for example) your call may be routed to a distant call center before being "handed off" to your preferred long-distance company, which might - unintentionally or intentionally - bill you as if your call originated from the distant call center rather than the actual location. As a result, you may be charged a higher long-distance rate than you expected.

Is call splashing legal?

A telephone company is permitted to base charges on an artificial point of origination if you:

- Request to be transferred to a different company's operator
- Are informed (before incurring any charges) that the call may be billed as if it originated elsewhere
- Consent to the transfer

How can I avoid being splashed?

- Listen carefully to the telephone operator and don't consent to any call transfers unless you understand what the operator is asking.
- Carefully read your phone bill to ensure the origination and destination locations of your long-distance phone calls are correct.
- If your phone call has been billed at a higher rate without your, file a complaint with your long-distance company.
- If you are unable to resolve the matter with your preferred long-distance company, you can file a complaint with the FCC.

Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Accessible formats

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number above, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

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Last Reviewed 2/2/15