

4901:1-6-12

Service requirements for BLES.

(A) A local exchange carrier (LEC) providing basic local exchange service (BLES) shall conduct its operations so as to ensure that the service is available, adequate, and reliable consistent with applicable industry standards.

(B) The fact that a LEC providing BLES fails to comply with any provision(s) within this chapter, or with other applicable federal or state telecommunications law, does not by itself constitute inadequate service as a matter of law. Rather, the question as to whether BLES is legally inadequate requires a formal determination by the commission, preceded by a hearing pursuant to section 4927.21 of the Revised Code unless the hearing is waived by the complainant and the respondent.

(C) A LEC shall provide BLES pursuant to the following standards:

(1) BLES shall be installed within five business days of the receipt by a telephone company of a completed application for new access line service, unless the customer requests or agrees to a later date.

(2) The requirement to install BLES in paragraph (C)(1) of this rule is not applicable where any of the following exist:

(a) A customer or applicant has not met pertinent tariff requirements.

(b) The need for special equipment or service.

(c) Military action, war, insurrection, riot, or strike.

(d) The customer misses an installation appointment.

(3) A LEC shall make reasonable efforts to repair a BLES outage within twenty-four hours, excluding Sundays and legal holidays, after the outage is reported to the telephone company.

(4) A BLES service outage or service-affecting problem shall be repaired within seventy-two hours after it is reported to the telephone company.

(5) If a BLES outage is reported to the telephone company and lasts more than seventy-two hours, the LEC shall credit every affected BLES customer, of which the LEC is aware, in the amount of one month's charges for BLES.

(6) The customer credit in paragraph (C)(5) of this rule is not applicable if the condition or failure to repair occurs as a result of any of the following:

(a) A customer's negligent or willful act.

(b) Malfunction of customer-owned telephone equipment or inside wire.

(c) Military action, war, insurrection, riot, or strike.

(d) Customer missing a repair appointment.

(7) No LEC shall establish a due date for payment earlier than fourteen consecutive days after the date the bill is postmarked for a bill for BLES provided to customers. The postmark date may appear on the bill rather than on the envelope, as long as the postmark date is never earlier than the date the bill actually enters the mail.

(8) A LEC may disconnect BLES for nonpayment of any amount past due on a billed account not earlier than fourteen days after the due date of the customer's bill, provided that the customer is given notice of the disconnection seven days before the disconnection.

(9) Such notice of disconnection may be included on the customer's next bill, provided the bill is postmarked at least seven days prior to the date of disconnection of service reflected on the bill, and provided that the disconnection language is clearly highlighted such that it stands apart from the customer's regular bill language. The notice shall identify the total dollar amount that must be paid to maintain BLES, the earliest date disconnection may occur, and the following statement:

"If you have a complaint in regard to this disconnection notice that cannot be resolved after you have called (name of the utility), or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for assistance at 1-800-686-7826 (toll free) or for TTY at 1-800-686-1570 (toll free) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or at www.puco.ohio.gov."

For residential disconnection notices, the text shall also include:

"Residential customers may also contact the Ohio Consumers' Counsel for assistance with complaints and utility issues at 1-877-742-5622 (toll free) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or at www.pickocc.org."

(10) A LEC may require a deposit, not to exceed two hundred thirty percent of a reasonable estimate of one month's service charges, for the installation of BLES for any person that it determines, in its discretion, is not creditworthy.

(11) A LEC shall, unless prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond the telephone company's control or unless the customer requests otherwise, reconnect a customer whose basic local exchange service was disconnected for nonpayment of past due charges not later than one business day after the day the earlier of the following occurs:

- (a) The receipt by the LEC of the full amount of past due charges.
- (b) The receipt by the LEC of the first payment under a mutually agreed upon payment arrangement.

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Certification

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