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## RECENT CHANGES TO AT&T LANDLINE SERVICE: INCREASED PRICES AND POSSIBLE DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICE

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### *Can AT&T raise the rates for my landline?*

Yes. The Illinois General Assembly recently changed the law to allow AT&T to eliminate the “Consumer’s Choice” rates, which were AT&T’s lowest residential rates for local calling and two features (such as caller-ID and call waiting). Many Illinois AT&T customers may see their rates increase now that these plans have been eliminated.

#### *Is AT&T authorized to shut off my landline?*

No, not immediately. AT&T must first follow a process provided by the General Assembly before it can deny a landline to any Illinois resident in its service territory.

If AT&T notifies you that it will discontinue your landline telephone service, you can inform the Illinois Commerce Commission by sending in a form (provided with AT&T’s notice) asserting that you do not believe you will have alternative, reliable telephone service and access to 911 service if AT&T discontinues your landline telephone service. The ICC must then ensure that you have service even if AT&T discontinues its service. AT&T also must get approval from the Federal Communications Commission before it can discontinue landline service.

#### *How will I get phone service if AT&T shuts off my landline?*

Your landline will not be shut off without notice. If the ICC finds that you do not have a reliable alternative service available to you, the ICC can require that AT&T continue to provide you with reliable telephone service. However, there may be “digital” or Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone service or cell phone service options available to you now at a reasonable price, in which case the ICC will not be able to force AT&T to continue to provide landline service.

#### *What is digital phone service?*

Digital phone service uses cable or a digital phone network to make phone calls. Digital phone service often requires you to purchase internet service.

#### *What is VoIP?*

Digital phone service is sometimes called “Voice Over Internet Protocol.” It uses internet technology to deliver telephone calls. This allows customers to place and receive calls over an existing high-speed internet connection, also known as broadband, rather than standard telephone lines.

#### *Do I have alternatives?*

Yes. If you already have internet access or cable television at your residence, your provider likely offers telephone service as well and will “bundle” the price with your other services. Digital or VoIP service is very similar to traditional phone service because it is wired. A key difference is that VoIP service does not work when your internet doesn’t work or you experience an electric outage.

You can also use cell phone service. If you already have a cell phone, you may be able to get another line to use as a home phone for as low as \$10.00 per month. If you use a cell phone to replace your landline, it is recommended to test it to be sure that it works adequately in your home. **Note that most cell phone companies require you to agree to a contract of 1-2 years and can include hefty early termination fees, so be sure to ask how long you may test the service before you are bound by the contract. Most major carriers allow 14 days.**

*What do I do if I have a pacemaker or some other medical monitoring device that works only on my landline?*

Contact the company that makes or provides the device so they can help you understand your options. Ask them if the device will work with VoIP or digital telephone service and if it will work with a cell phone. If they don't provide service that works with those technologies, you may need to identify another device provider that accommodates digital or cell service.

*How will this affect my home alarm system that works on my landline?*

Contact the home alarm company and ask if the system will work with VoIP or digital phone service and if it will work with a cell phone. If the system does not work with these technologies, inquire about an alternative system that works with these services.

*Will this affect me if I have a landline provider other than AT&T?*

No.

*I live in a rural area without access to reliable wireless service. How will I get phone service?*

AT&T cannot discontinue your landline if you don't have access to VoIP or wireless service. If you receive a notice from AT&T about discontinuation of service, you will have an opportunity to contact the Illinois Commerce Commission and ask them to investigate. If you don't have an alternative service, the ICC will tell AT&T it must continue to provide you with reliable telephone service.

*Will I be able to keep my current telephone number?*

Yes.

*Will my current telephone be compatible with new digital or VoIP phone service?*

The new digital or VoIP services should be able to use your inside telephone wiring or your existing telephone jacks for extensions to allow you to continue to use your current phone. If not, you may have to use a cordless telephone that connects at a single jack and has cordless extensions.

