



Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

Lila A. Jaber, Chairman



Using 10-10 Dial-Around Numbers

By now, the ads are familiar: notable athletes, comedians and sit-com veterans touting the virtues of "10-10" dial-around numbers. The question is, are 10-10 dial-around numbers really worth it? Depending on your calling habits, the answer may be "yes."

Using a 10-10 dialing prefix allows telephone customers to bypass their pre-selected long distance carrier - the carrier that would otherwise carry the customer's long-distance traffic when dialing a toll call. Why would customers bypass their carefully selected long distance companies in favor of other carriers? Because in certain circumstances, it may make financial sense.

Most 10-10 dial-around companies offer an attractive rate based on a call lasting for a specific length of time. As an example, one company offers to complete all calls of up to 20 minutes for \$1, a rate of five cents per minute. This rate may appear attractive, but it is important to remember that it applies only for calls of the specified duration. Use the 10-10 dial-around company in question and get a friend or relative's answering machine, and the rate increases to \$1 a minute.

Another condition that may affect the rate offered by a 10-10 dial-around company is the time of day or the day of the week a call is placed. As with the duration of the call, be familiar with the applicable terms and conditions that affect the timing of the calls to realize the maximum benefits available to consumers.

The same caveats that apply to the use of dial-around numbers for domestic calls apply to the use of 10-10 numbers for international calls: consumers should familiarize themselves with the terms and conditions that apply to the dial-around number, then compare the rates with those offered by their preselected long distance carriers. Smart shopping always pays, and the use of dial-around numbers is no exception.

Bear in mind that the PSC works closely with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to

minimize deceptive advertising in the long distance market. If you have a complaint about a dial-around number or require more information, please contact the PSC at **1-800-342-3552**, or by e-mail at contact@psc.state.fl.us. The PSC website is located at www.floridapsc.com and offers information on a range of telecommunications topics. Consumers wishing to contact the FCC may do so toll-free by dialing **1-800-CALL-FCC**. The toll-free number for the FTC is **1-877-FTC-HELP**.

"10-10" DIAL-AROUND TIPS

- 1** Beware of gimmicks. Don't be swayed by offers of prizes or rewards for using a particular 10-10 service. Base your decision instead on the best rate available.
- 2** Always check the per-minute rates before using any 10-10 number and read the fine print on any published material.
- 3** Remember that most discount rates offered by dial-around numbers require a minimum call duration. It may be useful to make sure the other party is available before placing the call to avoid a brief conversation at a high per-minute rate.
- 4** Also keep in mind that if the call placed using a dial-around is an interstate call, a universal service fee may be added (again, read the fine print), as will taxes and surcharges.

Lila A. Jaber is the Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission. The PSC sets the rates regulated utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately owned. Chairman Jaber is also a member of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service and the state chair of the Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services.