



Central Office  
OFFICE  
MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 7, 2016  
**TO:** All Offenders  
**FROM:** Bruce Reiser, Assistant Commissioner *Bruce Reiser*  
**SUBJECT:** FCC Ruling – Offender Telephone Charges

In December 2015, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) published an Order regulating the rates that can be charged for offender phone services. The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) recognizes the efforts the FCC has put forth to ensure the cost of inmate phone services are justified and reasonable.

The Order goes into effect March 17, 2016, and caps phone rates at \$.11 per minute. This change impacts prisons across the nation.

The FCC Order also requires that all charges be per minute, so the \$.35 per local call currently charged at metro facilities is no longer allowable. In an effort to keep the cost of calls affordable, the DOC has negotiated a rate of \$.05 per minute for all calls (debit, collect, local and long distance) for all facilities.

For those with hearing disabilities, the cost of placing a TTY-TTY call will be \$.01 per minute. These rates will remain in effect while the existing contract with Global Tel Link (GTL) is in place. The DOC is currently in the process of bidding a new contract which is expected to be awarded this summer.

Thank you for your attention to these changes. We understand the importance of the phone system to keep in touch with your friends and family, and for some this may increase the cost of phones. If you have questions or concerns, please work through your facility management teams.



## Department of Corrections Phone Flat Rates Talking Points

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- The new FCC Order requires a flat rate per-minute phone charge instead of charges per call
- The old rate structures will be eliminated
- The FCC Order states charges must not exceed \$.11 per minute— All MNDOC calls (interstate, intrastate, prepaid, collect) will now be \$.05 per minute plus taxes and fees
- Charges are the same at all DOC facilities
- TTY to TTY calls are \$.01 per minute in compliance with FCC requirements.
- Offenders are charged for the actual call time – not the 15 minute maximum.
- The average length of a call has been 11 minutes, which would cost \$.55 plus taxes/fees
- The offender phone account pays for cable TV, library books, recreation equipment, offender newspapers and other items that benefit offenders
- The offender phone contract is currently out for bid; we are reviewing proposals and expect the new contract to be in place by July 1, 2016
- Costs may change based on the new contract



Central Office  
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 9, 2016  
TO: All Offenders  
FROM: Bruce Reiser, Assistant Commissioner  
SUBJECT: Suspension of FCC Ruling -- Offender Phone Rates

*Bruce Reiser*

On March 7, 2016 the DOC issued a memo to all offenders regarding changes in phone rates due to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Order regulating the rates that can be charged for offender phone services. This Order was scheduled to go into effect March 17, 2016. On March 8, 2016 the DOC received notice that a U.S. Court of Appeals granted a stay, pending court review, of many of the provisions of the Order.

It is not known at this time how long it will take for the courts to resolve this issue. After careful consideration, the DOC has decided to move forward with the rate changes announced in the March 7, 2016 memo. The rate of \$.05 per minute for regular calls, and \$.01 per minute for TTY-TTY calls will go into effect at all facilities on March 17, 2016 as originally planned. These rates are fair and consistent and will allow offenders across all facilities to make reasonably priced phone calls.

Thank you again for your attention to these changes. If you have questions or concerns, please work through your facility management teams.