

Video/Cable Television **Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1. Q. What is the Michigan Public Service Commission's (MPSC) role in regards to video/cable television? Does the MPSC regulate cable television?**

A. The Commission's authority is limited to that provided by statute (2006 PA 480). In Section 12(1) of the Act, it states: "The Commission's authority to administer this Act is limited to the powers and duties explicitly provided for under this Act, and the Commission shall not have the authority to regulate or control a provider under this Act as a public utility." (emphasis added)

While the Commission's authority is limited, the Commission still has many responsibilities which include but are not limited to: reviews disputes between customers and providers, providers and providers, and providers and franchise entities; construct a standardized uniform agreement form; receive annual reports from providers; administer the formal process to review disputes; submit an annual report (February 1 of each year) to the Governor and Legislature, and order remedies and penalties for violations of the Act.
- 2. Q. Are you having a problem with your video/cable television provider?**

A. If you are experiencing problems with your provider, you should first contact your provider and attempt to resolve the dispute with them. If you are dissatisfied with the provider's response, or the dispute is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may file an informal complaint with the MPSC.
- 3. Q. Do you have a satellite television complaint?**

A. If you are experiencing a problem with your satellite television, you should contact the Federal Communications Commission (FCC): (888) 225-5322 or www.fcc.gov. The MPSC does not have authority over satellite complaints or inquiries.
- 4. Q. Are there any alternative providers in my area?**

A. If you are inquiring as to what other video/cable providers may be in your area, you should contact your local franchise entity directly. The franchise entity is the local unit of government in which a provider offers video services through a franchise. In most cases, the franchise entity is the township, village, or city that you live in. Since satellite providers do not have franchise agreements, you must contact the satellite providers directly.

5. Q. I would like to have cable service, but the cable company is requiring me to pay a large construction fee to bring the service to my house/business. Are cable companies allowed to require such a fee?

A. Yes. Per Section 76.309(i) of the FCC's cable rules: Standard installations will be performed within seven (7) business days after an order has been placed. "Standard" installations are those that are located up to 125 feet from the existing distribution system.

Therefore, a company can charge a customer a construction fee for any distance extending beyond 125 feet in order to bring the service to a customer's home.

6. Q. I returned equipment and boxes to my cable company and now I have a collection notice for unreturned equipment. What can I do?

A. First, immediately contact your provider. Explain to the provider that you have returned the equipment, and provide them with copies of your return receipts. If you are not able to resolve your complaint, you may submit a complaint to the MPSC for assistance. It is helpful if you know the date and location of where you returned the equipment, and if you still have your receipt that you received when you returned the equipment.

7. Q. My cable company damaged my property. What can I do?

A. As quickly as possible, you should first contact your cable provider and inform the company of the damage and attempt to resolve the issue with them. If you are not able to obtain a resolution, you may submit a complaint to the MPSC. However, Staff will only be able to assist you with your complaint. The MPSC does not make awards for damage claims. You may also consider filing suit in small claims court or filing a claim with your homeowners insurance.

8. Q. I have a cable line that is either on the ground or hanging very low, causing a public hazard. How do I have the cable line either hung properly or buried?

A. You should contact your provider and make them aware of the situation. If the problem is not quickly resolved, you may contact the MPSC and Staff will assist you with your complaint. We consider public hazards serious issues and will expedite the issue as quickly as possible.

9. **Q. I am losing some channels and my cable company's solution is to rent a digital box through them. I thought I didn't need a box for the national digital transition in June (2009)?**

A. The national digital transition in June (2009) pertains only to over-the-air broadcasting channels (i.e. NBC, CBS, ABC, etc.). If you subscribe to cable or satellite, you should not be impacted by the digital transition.

However, some cable providers are currently undergoing an internal migration to their system, where they are shifting analog cable specific channels to the digital tier. This move requires customers to obtain a digital box specifically through the company in order to receive those channels. This channel migration is completely separate from the June 12, 2009 national digital transition.