



California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

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Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.20-10-002

CPUC Adopts Permanent Rate Relief for Calling Services for Incarcerated Persons

SAN FRANCISCO, April 9, 2026 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today established permanent rate caps for incarcerated persons calling services in California, helping ensure that individuals in correctional facilities and their families have access to more affordable communication.

The decision caps intrastate calling rates for incarcerated persons calling services at \$0.045 per minute for debit, prepaid, and collect calls, and maintains existing protections limiting ancillary fees associated with these services. These protections apply to all telephone companies that provide intrastate calling services to incarcerated individuals in California facilities not covered by separate state policies providing free calls.

Key Consumer Protections

Incarcerated persons calling services providers must comply with the following requirements:

- Permanent rate cap of \$0.045 per minute for intrastate voice calls made by incarcerated persons.
- Continued prohibition on single-call, paper bill, live agent, and automated payment fees.
- Third-party financial transaction fees limited to pass-through costs, capped at \$6.95 per transaction.
- Government taxes and fees allowed only as pass-through charges with no markup.
- Prohibition on any additional ancillary service charges not explicitly approved by the CPUC.

These rules are intended to ensure that incarcerated individuals and their families are not subject to excessive rates or hidden fees when maintaining communication.

Supporting Family Connections

A study submitted in the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) proceeding to address high calling rates and fees associated with incarcerated persons communication services showed that maintaining contact with family members can improve outcomes for incarcerated individuals after release and reduce recidivism.

“Maintaining communication with family members is critical for rehabilitation and successful reentry into society,” said CPUC Commissioner Darcie L. Houck, who is assigned to the proceeding. “By establishing permanent rate protections, the CPUC is helping ensure that incarcerated Californians and their loved ones can stay connected without facing unreasonable costs. This decision extends rate protections to all local and federal facilities in California, ensuring that people held in these facilities are charged just and reasonable rates.”

“For too long, the families of incarcerated Californians have faced unnecessarily high costs just to stay in touch with their loved ones,” said CPUC President John Reynolds. “This decision establishes clear, permanent safeguards that prevent excessive rates and hidden fees while ensuring that communication services remain accessible and fair for the people who rely on them most.”

Background

The CPUC opened this proceeding in 2020 to examine the rates and conditions under which telecommunications services are provided to incarcerated people in California. The proceeding builds on the efforts by the FCC.

In 2021, the CPUC [adopted](#) interim rate caps of \$0.07 per minute for these calls while the CPUC gathered additional information on provider costs and market conditions. Today’s decision establishes a permanent statewide framework for intrastate calling services in facilities where calls are not already provided free of charge under California law.

Incarcerated persons calling services providers must implement the adopted rate caps and fee requirements and submit compliance filings to the CPUC. Providers must also notify facilities, customers, and account holders about the new rates and consumer protections.

More Information

- [Proposal Approved](#)

- [Proceeding Docket Card](#)
- [Proceeding Webpage](#)

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About the California Public Utilities Commission

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. Visit www.cpuc.ca.gov for more information.