

Chapter 6: Utilities

Long distance telephone

In addition to your monthly telephone charges, you pay extra for long distance phone calls from your home.

MTS is the local telephone service in Manitoba. You can have a long distance plan with MTS, or with another long distance phone company, such as AT&T, Sprint or Primus. Look in the Yellow Pages under "Telephone Companies" for more contact information.

Contact several long distance telephone companies to ask how their plan works. Here are some different types of plans:

- **Flat Rate** - This means that you pay the same amount of money no matter how many calls you make or how long you talk. This type of plan may be only for calls within Canada, not other countries. If you call other countries, you may have to pay extra. You should ask about this before you choose a flat rate plan. This flat rate does not include the cost of your local telephone service.
- **Time of day discounts** - Your phone call costs less if you call at certain times of day, usually evenings and weekends. You pay a certain amount for every minute of the call. The cost depends on where you call.
- **"Anytime" plans** - These plans are often advertised as "anytime, anywhere." That is not quite true. You pay the same price for each minute no matter what time of day you call. You may pay the same amount of money for one minute to anywhere in the

Long distance plan: a service that allows you to make long distance calls.

Before you choose a long distance plan, ask yourself these questions:

- How often do I make long distance calls?
- When will I call (morning, afternoon, evenings, weekdays, weekends)?
- Where will I call (many different countries, only one country outside of Canada, Canada only, or Manitoba only)?
- Will I call the same number most of the time, or many different numbers?
- How much did I spend on long-distance call for the last few months?

Here are some example to help you choose a long distance *phone plan*:

- If you only make long distance calls in Canada, but call at different times of day, consider either a flat rate or an "anytime" plan first. After a few months, you will know your monthly long distance charges. If you pay more than the flat rate amount most months, consider changing to a flat rate plan.

same country, however the cost will usually be different for each country or continent.

If you buy long distance from any company other than MTS, you will receive two bills each month - one for local phone service and one for long distance service. If you buy both services from MTS, you will get one bill. You pay the same amount for local phone service each month, no matter how many local calls you make.

Cellular Telephones

Dozens of companies offer cellular phone and phone plans. Look under "Cellular Telephones" in the Yellow Pages phone book for these companies. With a **phone plan** you buy a certain number of minutes per month of phone time. Once you use up these minutes you will pay extra for each additional minute.

You can buy "pre-paid" cards that give you a certain number of minutes to use. Once you use all the minutes, you buy a new card.

To save money, consider some of these items before you buy and choose a plan:

- Think about the time of day you use your phone the most. Daytime "peak" hours are usually more expensive. Some plans give unlimited calls on evenings and weekends.
- Decide what features you want on your phone, such as voice mail, **call waiting** and **text messaging**. See if these features are included in the plan, or if they cost extra.
- If you travel a lot and plan to use your cell phone when you're away, consider using a company that includes long distance calling in the cost of regular minutes.
- Ask your service provider for a map showing

- If you call many different places, but only in the evening, you could choose a plan with "time of day discounts." Look at the places you call. Ask the price for one minute in the evening to those places. Then compare the same kind of plan from one or two other companies. If you notice that your long distance bill is over the cost of the "flat rate" plan, consider switching to that kind of plan.

Call waiting: If someone calls you while you are already using your phone, a beeping sound will let you know that you have another call.

Text messaging: You can send someone a written message, using your cell phone, that they can read on their cell phone.

Ask the company if they charge for the following:

- installation
- local channels
- dish & receiver

parts of the country where you can use a cell phone. Not all companys' phones work outside of Winnipeg.

- Who will be phoning you on the cell phone? It's important to know that you pay for calls that you receive, as well as the ones you make.

Television

Cable TV- Many companies offer cable TV service. See *Cable Television Systems* in the Yellow Pages phone book. Each company offers several choices of channels you can buy. Basic cable offers channels 2 to 13. You must buy basic cable before you can buy any extra channels. Full cable gives you major Canadian and US channels and some specialty channels. They do not offer movie channels. You must pay extra for the movie channels.

Digital Cable- To receive digital cable, you must first buy a cable box from your cable company. Digital cable gives you full cable, plus access to buy more specialty channels and Pay Per View channels. You can buy these in packages, or as individual channels.

Pay Per View- These channels show movies most of the time. They are different because you don't order the channel, you order the movie when you want to watch it. The charge for the movies comes on your cable TV bill.

MTS TV- MTS offers television services in many areas of Winnipeg. MTS TV is similar to digital cable offered in Winnipeg by Shaw. You must buy their basic package of channels, and then you can buy more channels individually or in packages.

If you have an Internet connection at home, it is possible to "bundle" your services and save

money. For example, if you have Shaw Cable and Internet you can get a discount off your monthly bill. Or, if you have MTS TV, Internet and long distance, it is possible to save money on your MTS bill.

Satellite TV

If you want more television channels than you can get from a cable company, you can buy satellite TV. There are two common types of satellite TV: Direct-to-Home Satellite (DTH) and Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS).

To get satellite TV you must buy a dish and receiver. The dish looks like a metal bowl about 18 inches in diameter and is attached to the outside of your house. The receiver is a box that goes on top of your TV. The receiver only works for one TV, so if you want satellite on more than one TV, you must buy a second receiver. Installation of the dish and receiver costs extra.

With satellite television, you get many channels, but local channels might not be included. Often, you have to pay extra to get local channels.

Before you buy satellite service, find out exactly how much the satellite service will cost you and what the monthly charge will be.

Before you buy a Satellite Television

- Find out what TV channels are offered. Some companies don't carry local TV channels for Winnipeg or Manitoba.
- Find out how big the dish will be and where it has to be installed. Installation may cost extra or it may be included in the cost of the dish.
- If you live in a condo or apartment, you may have to obtain permission from the

management before installing a satellite dish.

- Make sure the satellite dish seller has a license. You can find out if they are licensed by calling the CRTC (Canadian Radio - Television Telecommunications Commission) at 983-6306.

