

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY CABLE COMMISSION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT FAQs



The following information provides answers to the most commonly asked cable questions. If you have an issue that is not addressed, please call us: (301) 952-3990 or email us: cablecommission@co.pg.md.us.

BILLING



➤ **When I disconnect service, when does the billing stop?**

When a customer contacts the cable provider to disconnect service, the billing for the monthly subscription should stop the date of the disconnect request.

➤ **Why is my cable provider billing me in advance?**

Cable providers are permitted by the FCC to bill one month in advance for standard monthly charges.

➤ **Why is my monthly bill more than advertised?**

A cable provider's advertised price is usually for service only. Equipment, franchise fees and taxes are in addition to the advertised service price. Additionally, there may be a one-time installation fee or a pro-rated portion on the first bill.

➤ **What do the "franchise fees" and Public, Educational and Government (PEG) and I-NET charges on my bill mean?**

Prince George's County's cable franchise agreements require the cable providers to pay for the public rights-of-way through franchise fees and support for Public, Educational and Government (PEG) cable channels and the County's Institutional Network. Federal law allows the cable providers to pass on these fees to customers. A portion of these fees goes to support Prince George's County Cable Television (CTV), the Prince George's County government channel, and the government institutional network.

➤ **Can I pay my bill at the Cable Commission?**

No. Your cable bill must be paid to your cable provider.

➤ **Credits for Outages**

If a customer experiences a missed appointment due to the fault of the cable provider, the cable provider shall credit the customer's account Twenty dollars (\$20.00) for each missed appointment, or grant the customer such other equivalent remedy as the customer and cable provider may agree. This is in addition to any other penalties or liquidated damages.

➤ **Can the Cable Commission answer questions about the charges on my bill?**

No. Any questions about your cable bill should be directed to your cable provider.

➤ **Where is the Verizon Service Center located in Prince George's County?**

Verizon
375 Prince Georges Blvd
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
1-877-248-1875

➤ **Where are the Comcast's Service Centers located in Prince George's County?**

Comcast
9609 Annapolis Road
Lanham, MD 20706
1-888-966-7552

Comcast
9315 Largo Drive West
Largo, MD 20774
1-888-966-7552

Comcast
2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, MD 20715
1-888-966-7552

CONSTRUCTION



➤ **Is the cable provider permitted to dig in my yard?**

Before entering any person's property for proposed construction work in connection with the rebuild for the system upgrade of a cable provider's cable system the cable provider must have permission of the property owner and shall contact the property owner of (in case of residential property) the resident at least two (2) days in advance, when possible. Proper restoration is to be performed after the completion of construction.

➤ **Why are paint markings in my yard?**

The area has been marked for existing underground utilities. These markings are required prior to construction taking place.

➤ **What do I do if I find a cable wire lying on my property?**

Contact the Cable Commission on (301) 952-3990. Our office will send an Inspector to your home and determine to which cable provider the wiring belongs. We will notify the appropriate cable provider of the necessary repairs.

➤ **What do I do if there is cable equipment damaged in my neighborhood?**

Contact the Cable Commission on (301) 952-3990. Our office will have an Inspector visit the property and determine to which cable provider the cable equipment belongs. We will notify the appropriate cable provider of the necessary repairs.

EQUIPMENT



➤ **Am I responsible for the cable provider's equipment?**

All cable provider's owned equipment is the responsibility of the customer. This includes cable converter boxes, remotes, cable modems, cable cards, routers, and all accompanying power cords. Once disconnecting service, all equipment must be returned to the cable provider in the municipality where service was delivered. Please remember to secure and retain a receipt with the serial numbers for all equipment.

➤ **What's the process for exchanging broken equipment:**

Cable equipment must be exchanged in the municipality where service was delivered.

Comcast: The equipment can be exchanged at the following Comcast's Service Centers.

Comcast Service Centers: 1-888-966-7552

- 9609 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD 20706
- 9315 Largo Drive West, Largo, MD 20774
- 2614 Kenhill Drive, Bowie, MD 20715

Verizon: The customer should call the office (1-800-VERIZON) to trouble-shoot the issue and then if necessary the customer service team would either send the customer a new set top box (STB) and a return label or the equipment can be exchanged at the following Verizon Service Center. Please note: Verizon does not repair STBs or any other equipment.

Verizon Service Center: 1-877-248-1875

- 375 Prince George's Blvd.; Upper Marlboro, MD 20774

➤ **Where do I return the in-home cable equipment?**

Cable equipment must be returned to the cable provider in the municipality where service was delivered.

Equipment may be returned to:

Comcast Service Centers: 1-888-966-7552

- 9609 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD 20706
- 9315 Largo Drive West, Largo, MD 20774
- 2614 Kenhill Drive, Bowie, MD 20715
-

Verizon Service Center: 1-877-248-1875

- 375 Prince George's Blvd.; Upper Marlboro, MD 20774

➤ **I have a new flat panel HDTV. Why do I need a cable/converter box?**

Both cable providers encrypt or scramble their signal and only their equipment will decrypt their signal. The only channels that are not encrypted are the off-air network channels and the PEG channels.

TECHNICAL ISSUES



➤ **Power outages**

When the electricity is interrupted there is the very strong possibility that all cable services will also be interrupted, even with a home supplemental power supply. For FiOS telephone customers, a battery backup system is activated and will provide additional telephone service for a limited time. Once electrical power is restored, cable may or may not be restored.

➤ **Computer hardware and software issues**

Any computer hardware or software problem is the responsibility of the customer. Cable providers will provide some basic level of assistance regarding your in-home computer at no cost.

➤ **The cable provider is asking me to switch my cable modem to the new DOCSIS 3.0 modem**

I have an older modem. What's the difference between a DOCSIS 2.0 and a DOCSIS 3.0 cable modem?

Higher speeds require a DOCSIS 3.0 modem because of the "channel bonding" technology used. The delivery of higher Internet speeds cannot be accomplished by older modems. If your internet speed is 10Mbps or below, you should be fine using a DOCSIS 2.0 mode. Internet speeds at 12Mbps or higher use channel bonding and a

DOCSIS 3.0 modem is required. If your DOCSIS 2.0 modem is working well, then keep it.

PROGRAMMING



➤ **Does the County have any control over the programming that is offered by the cable provider?**

The only programming jurisdiction granted to the County is oversight of the Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels that are produced by the local municipalities. The County cannot require the carriage of certain cable channels on the cable system.

➤ **What are the Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Access Channels?**

Prince George's County Community Television (CTV)
Channel(s): Comcast 70, 76, // Verizon FIOS 42

Prince George's County Public School
Channel(s): Comcast 96, 77, 78 // Verizon FIOS 37, 38

Prince George's Community College (PGCC)
Channel(s): Comcast 75 // Verizon FIOS 44

Bowie State University (BSU-TV)
Channel(s): Comcast 74 // Verizon FIOS 43

University of Maryland University College (UMUC-TV)
Channel(s): Comcast 73 // Verizon FIOS 18

University of Maryland (UMTV)
Channel(s): Comcast 72 // Verizon FIOS 40

Public Safety
Channel(s): Comcast 69 // Verizon FIOS 39

Local Municipalities
Channel(s): Comcast 71 // Verizon FIOS 41

RATE & SERVICE REGULATION

➤ **Does Prince George's County regulate cable rates?**

Federal law prevents local governments from regulating cable rates where there is "effective competition" as defined by federal law. However, in accordance with Section Sec. 5A-110 of the County Code, the Prince George's County CATV Commission shall only enforce the rate regulations promulgated by the FCC in 47 CFR 76.922, et seq., for the establishment of initial basic cable service and associated equipment rates and for basic cable service and associated equipment rate increases.

Maximum permitted rates in these areas are set by applying rules and formulas established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), but the County has no authority over the rates charged.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY

➤ **Do I have a choice of cable providers?**

The county issues only non-exclusive franchises for cable television service. Prince George's County manages two cable franchises - Comcast and Verizon. Comcast provides cable service to most all areas of the County. Verizon provides cable services in many areas of the County. Please contact Verizon to verify the availability of service in a specific area.

➤ **Neither cable provider offers service to my address**

There are homes in Prince George' County where cable service is not available. These are generally rural areas where the infrastructure needed to provide service has not been constructed. In these cases, the cost to build the infrastructure necessary to provide cable services may be deferred to the individual requesting service. A plant extension extends the cable infrastructure to provide service to a specific area or neighborhood. There are several distance and equipment factors that determine if the cable provider is permitted to charge the homeowner.

➤ **Who regulates traditional telephone or DSL service in the state of Maryland?**

The Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates traditional telephone service in the State of Maryland. You can contact the PSC on 1-800-492-0474 or on-line at www.psc.state.md.us.

➤ **Does the Cable Commission address internet services?**

No. The Cable Commission only addresses cable television related issues. For complaints about internet service, you can contact the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on 1-888-225-5322 or on-line at <http://www.fcc.gov/complaints>.

➤ **Does the Cable Commission regulate Direct TV and the Dish Network?**

No. The Cable Commission only regulates the County's franchised cable providers: Comcast and Verizon.

➤ **How can I get cable information from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)?**

Cable Service Bureau Fact Sheets are available for viewing at the [Federal Communications Commission](#) website.

➤ **Where can I find the Cable Franchise Agreements and County Code?**

You can find this information on the [Cable Television Commission](#) website.

➤ **I have a problem with the cable provider that they are not resolving satisfactorily. What can be done about it?**

You may file a complaint with the Cable Television Commission. There are various ways to file a complaint.

They are as follows:

Prince George's County Information Hotline: [CountyClick: 3-1-1](#)

Phone: (301) 952-3990

E-Mail: CableCommission@co.pg.md.us

Website: [On-line Complaint Form](#)

Monthly Meetings (Open to the General Public):

- Every 4th Wednesday at 6:00pm:
- Largo Government Center, 9201 Basil Court, Room 102, Largo, MD 20774