



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC MARKS MILESTONE IN EFFORT TO ELIMINATE ‘BILL SHOCK’

Hundreds of millions Americans will now receive automatic usage alerts when data, voice, and text charges approach or exceed plan limits

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today announced that approximately 97 percent of wireless customers across the nation are now protected from bill shock as participating U.S. wireless companies have met an April 17 deadline to provide free, automatic alerts to customers who approach or exceed their wireless plan limits. A recent FCC survey found that 30 million Americans – or one in six wireless users – have experienced bill shock.

Bill shock is a sudden and unexpected increase in monthly wireless bills that happens when consumers’ unknowingly exceeding plan limits for voice, data and text. Bill shock can also happen when consumers travel abroad and get hit with unexpected international roaming charges.

“This milestone is a clear win for consumers,” said Chairman Julius Genachowski. “These text alerts will allow consumers to enjoy the benefits of mobile without unexpected hits to their wallets.”

In October 2011, Chairman Genachowski announced a new program that would provide free alerts for wireless consumers as they approach monthly voice, data and text limits, and after those limits have been exceeded. Chairman Genachowski was joined by CTIA-The Wireless Association.

As of the April 17, 2013 deadline, participating members of CTIA are voluntarily providing free, automatic usage-based alerts when they approach or exceed plan limits for data, voice, and text, or when international roaming charges may be applied.

As part of its continuing consumer education mission, the FCC yesterday held a public [Consumer Workshop](#) to address bill shock as well as cramming, the practice of placing unauthorized, misleading or deceptive charges on telephone bills. The workshop helped to educate consumers about how to protect themselves from both of these problems, and included a discussion of policies addressing these issues.

Also, the FCC updated its **Bill Shock Web Portal** to give consumers at-a-glance status of carriers’ reported compliance on bill shock alerts. (Visit the Web page at FCC.gov/bill-shock-alerts.) The Bill Shock Web Portal offers links to participating carrier websites, meeting commitments from last year’s agreement with CTIA and Consumers Union to clearly disclose policies and tools regarding usage balances and alerts.

ABOUT THE FCC’S CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT AGENDA

The FCC’s Consumer Empowerment Agenda focuses on harnessing technology and information to help consumers make informed decisions in the communications marketplace. The agency’s Consumer

Empowerment Agenda includes resources to help Americans protect themselves against cramming, mystery fees, and bill shock along with greater openness and transparency efforts to make more data easily available to the public. In the past year, the FCC has introduced new consumer-oriented initiatives to combat cell phone theft, prevent hidden fees on prepaid calling cards, and enforcement actions to protect consumers from robocalls and jammers.

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News and other information about the FCC is available at www.fcc.gov.