

Non-Existent Circuits FAQ

SUMMARY:

Are you paying for a phone service that is no longer in use or simply doesn't exist? This case is specifically about special circuits commonly known as non-switched analog circuits. Some typical examples are listed below.

MOST IMPORTANT: If you have one of these circuits, you must determine if the current circuit is working or whether you are being billed for something that is not in service. Teletruth has set up a hotline to help customers through this process as well as audit phone bills for further mistakes --- and refunds.

HOTLINE NUMBER 1-800-780-1939

HOTLINE EMAIL: circuits@teletruth.org

MOST IMPORTANT: You must contact VNJ using the toll-free number provided in the settlement announcement on or before the date that is printed on the announcement. Failure to act will make you ineligible to receive any of the settlement benefits including a two year credit for unusable circuits.

The refunds can be quite large: If a customer is paying for a non-existent burglar alarm circuit they could be entitled to \$600, over \$2,300 for a low-speed data circuit.

Because of the complexity of phone bills, you can either contact Verizon once you receive the notice, or you may consider working with Teletruth.

Teletruth is also offering to examine your company's entire phone bill for other mistakes and potential refunds not covered under this settlement.

Top 20 Questions & Answers:

1) What is an analog non-switched access circuit?

These phone services are commonly used for:

- Burglar alarm circuit. Could also be used for a fire alarm.
- Telemetry circuit. Used for remote meter reading or control signals.
- Private line. Used as an automatic ringdown circuit, like a hotline.
- Radio tie line. Used to connect radio base stations to antenna's.
- Off premise extension. Used to connect a dialtone line at a remote location.
- Secretarial line. Used to connect to an answering service.
- Data circuit. Low speed data line between 2 or more locations

2) How do I know if I am a member of the class?

Verizon should have sent you the “Notice of Pendency of Action, Proposed Settlement and Hearing on Proposed Settlement” document. The notice was sent to all VNJ customers based upon records maintained by VNJ. Those records show that you may be a member of the Settlement Class.

For a sample see: <http://www.findjustice.com/cases/JuntoVer/Index.htm>

A “Final Notice of Settlement” will be sent to you sometime before October 4th, 2006.

See: <http://www.findjustice.com/cases/JuntoVer/Index.htm>

3) If I am a member of the class, what are my options?

The question is – Are you paying for any circuits that are no longer in service? Teletruth has found that a significant number of customers, when audited, were paying for circuits that were no longer in service.

If you are knowledgeable about special circuits and have good records and documentation, you just need to call the toll-free number that is printed on the settlement announcement. If you believe the circuits are eligible for the 24 month credit, you should affirm this with the VNJ representative. VNJ will most likely schedule a physical inspection to make a determination if the circuit is usable, destroyed or unusable.

4) As a non-auditor or telecom expert, how do I identify special circuits on my bill?

The problem with special access circuits is that they may be hidden or not described as such on the actual phone bill. Here is a bill that was sent to Teletruth. As you can see, there is inadequate information on the bill to explain what the charges are. In this case, the customer is being charged for a non-existent circuit. Our audit also found that this customer was charged “inside wire maintenance” on the non-existent circuit and is potentially owed over \$1000 in refunds.

See; <http://www.teletruth.org/nonexistentbill.htm>

5) There are 2 types of claims:

You will be able to make two types of claims: (1) a disconnect request, or (2) a circuit claim. A disconnect claim stops any future payments for the unused circuit while a ‘circuit claim’ gives the customer a 24 month credit on the phone bill if VNJ classifies the circuit as unusable.

6) I am not a very technical person, can Teletruth assist me?

Since Teletruth data led to the filing of the class action lawsuit and has expertise in this matter, it is strongly recommended that Teletruth be engaged on your behalf to insure that you receive the benefits available to you under this settlement. Teletruth can offer support

by dealing directly with VNJ on your behalf and acting as your expert consultant. Teletruth will be happy to discuss the details on an individual basis.

7) If I have been charged for non-switched analog circuits, what kind of refund can I expect?

There are a wide variety of service types. The list of service codes has been provided on the Pendency Notice. The applicable tariff charges will dictate the amount of the credit. For example a 2 year credit for a burglar alarm would be approximately \$600 while a more expensive data circuit would be approximately \$2,300. This is based upon a two point circuit that originates and terminates in the same local exchange. Some circuits could be much higher depending on the number of termination points and the distance.

8) What happens if I am a member of the class and I ignore the settlement announcement?

It is important that you act before the date printed in the announcement. In order to receive the benefits associated with this settlement, you must contact VNJ using the toll-free number provided in the announcement on or before the date that is printed on the announcement. Failure to act will make you ineligible to receive any of the settlement benefits including the two year credit.

9) Will I receive a refund check?

If eligible for monetary relief under the agreement, the credit will first be applied to the phone bill and the class member can request a refund check for the remaining balance.

10) If I contact VNJ to arrange for a free physical inspection, should I have an expert available to meet with the VNJ representative?

If you feel that you have the expertise to handle the inspection, you do not have to hire a consultant or billing expert. Teletruth has handled hundreds of billing investigations which include site inspections with the carrier's technician. Missing a minor detail could mean the difference between receiving the 2 year credit or VNJ classifying the circuit as usable with no credit offered.

11) If I arrange a free physical inspection with VNJ and I disagree with their findings, what should I do?

If VNJ denies your circuit claim, you can appeal through class counsel. If you engage Teletruth to act on your behalf, we will contact class counsel and prepare any technical arguments and evidence that was discovered during the physical inspection. Unless you have a technical background in circuit ordering, provisioning and billing, Teletruth strongly recommends engaging an expert.

12) Who determines if a special circuit is usable, destroyed or unusable?

As a member of the class, VNJ billing records indicate that you are being charged for one or more special circuits. There are a number of ways that a special circuit can become destroyed or unusable. VNJ will look at the various plant records that record the details of each special circuit. This information will be checked. VNJ will assign the category.

13) What can I do if I disagree with VNJ?

If you make a circuit claim and disagree with VNJ's decision to classify the circuit as useable or destroyed, you can appeal the decision. In that case, you should contact class counsel. Class counsel's contact information is included in the notice.

14) If my circuits are not eligible for the 24-month credit, why should I respond?

For circuits that are no longer being used, you can still save money going forward by having the circuits removed from your monthly bill. In many cases, class members can still receive this benefit, even if you are ineligible for the 24 month credit.

15) If I decide to take action, how much time do I have to act?

The notice of settlement has a date printed on it. You must act on or before that date in order to be eligible for the benefits of the settlement.

16) The class action settlement only covers certain special circuits, how do I know if the rest of the charges are correct?

Based upon our experience and auditing phone bills for over 20 years, this would be an appropriate time to have the entire bill audited. Teletruth has studied phone bills across the country and found an error rate exceeding 50%. While this class action settlement covers non-switched analog circuits, there are many other circuits that are not included in the settlement. Teletruth recommends that a complete audit be performed.

17) Why should I hire Teletruth?

Teletruth auditors actually uncovered the special circuits involved in this settlement. Our auditors are billing experts and understand how technology is deployed and physically installed at your premises. Our knowledge of tariffs and complex billing issues combined with our expertise in the field, allows us to be effective advocates and monitors when performing physical inspections with the carrier representatives. Not only can we talk the talk, we can walk the walk.

18) If I hire Teletruth, how much will it cost to handle my claim?

For class members who feel that they lack the expertise to handle the claims process or just don't have the time, Teletruth can work with you to file your claim and perform all the work required to process the claim, arrange and coordinate the physical inspection, file any appeals when needed, verify all credits and track the credits/refunds to receipt.

The cost of providing this service can be provided on a contingency basis or an hourly rate.

19) How much will it cost if I hire Teletruth to perform a complete audit?

Teletruth offers its auditing service on a contingency basis. The fees, if any, are only payable if a refund/credit is secured and/or the monthly service charges and usage can be reduced. Our standard terms are 50% of any refund/credit and 50% of the first year savings. If there are no refunds/credits secured or any monthly savings, there is no charge for the audit.

20) Contacting legal counsel.

If you wish to appeal Verizon's decision pertaining to your circuits, you can contact the firm of Mehri & Skalet at circuits@findjustice.com or call 202-822-5100.

More about Teletruth
<http://www.teletruth.org>