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FAQ: FIBERNET BROADCAST TELEVISION SURCHARGES

WHAT FEES AND SURCHARGES ARE INCLUDED ON MY BILL?

FiberNet television subscriptions include a Local Broadcast Fee and a Sports Surcharge.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL BROADCAST FEE?

This fee was created to partially offset the overall cost for FiberNet to retransmit programs created by broadcast television stations like NBC, ABC, CBS and others. These broadcasters charge FiberNet and other cable service providers significant fees to retransmit their signal over our cable lines to our customers. These retransmission fees are the largest cost in our business. The fees are growing at four times the rate of inflation, faster than FiberNet and other cable companies can absorb. The Local Broadcast Fee helps FiberNet maintain these channels in our line-up.

WHAT IS THE SPORTS SURCHARGE?

This surcharge is similar to the Local Broadcast Fee. It offsets the rapidly rising cost for FiberNet to broadcast sports-related programming.

WHY AM I PAYING THESE COSTS NOW?

The fees and surcharges are the direct result of sky rocketing programming costs. Local broadcast signals were historically available at little to no cost, but recent extreme fee increases from broadcasters have necessitated that most cable companies introduce fees to offset a portion of the overall cost. Similar significant price increases have affected sports programming costs.

WHERE WILL I SEE THESE SURCHARGES ON MY BILL?

All fees and surcharges are listed individually beneath the heading "Current Month Activity" on your monthly bill.

ARE THESE GOVERNMENT TAXES OR FEES?

No, these are not taxes or fees imposed by the government. They are separate from cable television franchise fees and taxes FiberNet must pay to the local, state, and federal government. These surcharges are an action taken by FiberNet to recover a portion of the dramatically increasing costs of local broadcast television and sports programming.

ARE OTHER CABLE COMPANIES CHARGING THE SAME FEES OR JUST FIBERNET?

The majority of cable companies now add surcharges to partially or fully cover the retransmission costs from local broadcast stations and the costs of sports programming. Those who have not added this type of surcharge will likely begin to do so as rates continue to rise.

WHY CAN BROADCAST TV STATIONS CHARGE FOR CARRIAGE OF THEIR SIGNALS?

Broadcast television stations distribute their signals over the air using a free spectrum granted to them by the federal government. The government then allows the same broadcast television stations to charge cable and satellite companies for the signals. If FiberNet doesn't agree to pay, broadcasters can force us to drop their channels, thereby adversely impacting our customers.

ARE ALL LOCAL BROADCAST TV STATIONS CHARGING FIBERNET?

Currently the majority of local television stations require significant payment from any cable provider to retransmit their programming. It is a portion of their charges that are reflected in the Local Broadcast Fee.

CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT INDIVIDUAL STATIONS COST?

No, our contracts prohibit us from disclosing information contained in agreements with individual stations. This includes the fees they charge FiberNet.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR CHANNELS I DON'T WATCH?

This is the direct result of how broadcasters sell their channels to FiberNet and other cable providers. First, they require cable companies to pay a fee for every household that receives a channel, regardless of whether anyone in the household watches the channel. In addition, the content creators and TV networks set rules and guidelines for how FiberNet sells their shows and channels to customers. They specify which channels must be sold together, where the channels are positioned, and how the channels are placed in packages. This often means carrying less popular and less viewed networks in the more popular cable packages.

WHAT IS RETRANSMISSION CONSENT?

Retransmission consent refers to a part of the 1992 United States Television Protection and Competition Act that requires cable operators to obtain permission from broadcasters before carrying their programming. Without written consent of the local broadcast stations, cable companies are not allowed to carry the signals. Unfortunately, the local broadcast television stations are increasingly imposing huge demands for cash that drive up a cable company's cost of doing business, and this pricing ultimately affects customers.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Make your voice heard! Broadcasters, politicians, and other viewers need to hear your opinion. Your best option is to write to your US Congressmen and US Senators to let them know your views. They created these regulations, and they can change them!