

Glossary of Basic Payphone Terms

Protel® specific terms are indicated with *.

ANI- Automatic Number Identification; the term ANI (pronounced like the name Annie) has come to mean a phone's number. Automatic Number Identification refers to the system used to identify the phone number of an incoming call (caller ID).

Central Office Code (COC) - A COC is a three-digit code which is assigned to a particular (set of) central office switch(es). This is the second set of three digits in a 10-digit NANP telephone number. This three-digit number specifies a set of 10,000 phone lines, which generally all share a common switch and geographic area. Often called an NXX or office code.

COCOT- Customer Owned Coin Operated Telephone; while this acronym applies to telephone equipment, COCOT has come to mean an independent payphone vendor that provides and maintains payphones. COCOT distinguishes the independent payphone vendor from the long-established Local Exchange Carriers (LECs) who also provide payphones. Another term that means the same as COCOT is Independent Payphone Provider (IPP).

Dialing Pattern - The dialing pattern controls how a switch completes calls. The dialing pattern controls what digits can be (or must be) dialed in order to complete a call.

Discount - a reduction in charge for placing a call during low usage periods.

Exchange - Often misused to mean Central Office Code, an actual exchange is a geographic area served by a particular central office switch. You should avoid this term, unless discussing a tariff where it is used.

Foreign NPA - An NPA other than the home NPA for a given phone.

IXC - Interexchange Carrier (also referred to as an IEC); a company that provides long distance service across LATAs

LATA - Local Access Transport Area; a geographic area within which Local Exchange Carriers (LEC) can offer local and toll service. Before 1996, LECs had a monopoly on local and toll service within their designated LATAs; calls from one LATA to another had to be passed to an Interexchange Carrier. Following the Telecommunications Act of 1996, competition is being introduced to local and intraLATA service, and LECs are being permitted to provide long distance service. The exact regulations may still vary from state to state.

LEC - Local Exchange Company; a company that provides local phone service. Before 1996, LECs had monopolies on local service in their designated areas. Following the Telecommunications Act of 1996, competition is being introduced to local service, and the distinction between LECs and long-distance providers will likely blur.

Multi Band NPA* - an NPA which has assigned office codes at different rates. In a given call costing record, calls to a multi-band NPA will NOT all have the same cost. Therefore, at least two bands are needed to properly rate calls to that NPA

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NANPA - North American Numbering Plan Area; this is the part of the world that includes the US, Canada, and many Caribbean countries as well as Guam and Midway. This area is also known as World Zone 1 (WZ1).

This area is divided into smaller geographic regions called Numbering Plan Areas (NPA). There are certain special Numbering Plan Areas which do not refer to non-geographic areas (for example toll free service has two numbering plan areas assigned to it, 800 and 888.)

NPA - Numbering Plan Area, otherwise known as an Area Code. Almost always these two terms are used interchangeably, but keep in mind that the area code is the number while the NPA is actually the geographic region (or special service).

NXX - Frequently this is used to indicate the second group of three digits in a 10-digit NANP telephone number. This is more properly called the Central Office Code or Office Code. Technically NXX is a short hand way of indicating a pattern of 3 digits: N means any number 2-9, and X means any number.

Office Code - The three-digit code that is assigned to a particular (set of) central office switch(es). This is the second set of three digits in a 10-digit NANP telephone number. This three-digit number specifies a set of 10,000 phone lines, which generally all share a common switch and geographic area. Often called an NXX or central office code.

PSP - Payphone Service Provider; PSP refers to any company that installs and services payphones. After the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Local Exchange Carriers (LEC) were required to separate their payphone divisions from

the parent company. That is, the payphone divisions could no longer be subsidized by the parent company. After a LEC's payphone division is no longer subsidized, it comes under that same laws as Independent Payphone Providers (IPP). The term PSP came into use to include IPPs and LEC payphone companies.

Rate Center - a geographical point that can be an endpoint for a toll call. Generally a relatively large geographic region is taken to be located at the same single point for distance measuring purposes. This makes sense if you consider that all of an area's phones are actually wired from the same building.

Rate Area* - a set of office codes that all have the same call rating, both incoming and outgoing.

Single Band NPA* - an NPA in which all office codes are rated at the same rate. In a given call costing record, all calls to a single-band NPA have the same cost. Therefore, a single cost band is needed to properly rate calls to that NPA.

Surcharge - a per call charge that is added for a "special" service. Generally for us, this special service is the real time rating and collection for the call. Surcharges are not generally discounted

Tariff - a legal document that specifies what price will be charged for a particular good or service. Generally, it is like a contract between a regulatory agency (like the FCC or a state Public Utilities Commission) and a provider (like a COCOT, LEC or IXC). Keep in mind that most tariffs list an exact charge for a particular service (for instance, the first 15 minutes of a local phone call). In such cases this is the exact charge that must be applied. It is illegal to charge any more or any less than this charge.

Toll charge - A (generally) distance sensitive charge for the placing of a call.