

## **Offender Phone System Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Question:** Why was the equipment changed at all locations?

**Answer:** Through a series of acquisitions and equipment transfers GTL became the provider for the Oklahoma inmate phone system. The Department of Corrections (DOC) directed GTL to ensure the system was meeting minimum performance standards. GTL surveyed the equipment. The survey identified broken equipment, equipment from multiple manufacturers, and substandard operation. GTL determined it was more cost effective to replace the old equipment with new equipment with each site having the same configuration and operation.

**Question:** Can I receive a collect call from an offender?

**Answer:** Collect calls can be received from offenders if your local telephone company will agree to bill you for the call. AT&T is one of the companies that will process the collect call billing. There is also a \$1.50 per month billing fee. This is a set fee and is not tied to the number of calls. As with all calls, you will be asked if you want to receive the call prior to being connected to the offender.

**Question:** Is there a limit on collect phone calls that can be made to a phone number?

**Answer:** Yes. To limit bad debt there is a limit of \$300 within a 90 day period for collect calls processed and billed by your local telephone company (e.g. AT&T). Persons with good credit can set up direct billing with GTL for a higher limit on collect calls.

**Question:** Can I set up an account to prepay for calls?

**Answer:** The system offers an Advance pay capability. There are two options for setting up Advance Pay. The first option is to use a credit card. The account can be set up for \$25 or \$50. There is a fee charged by the credit card company for setting up the account. This fee is \$4.75 for the \$25 account and \$9.50 for the \$50 account. You pay the fee each time the account is refreshed. The second option is to set up an Advance Pay account using a check, money order, or wire transfer. There are no fees associated with this option.

**Question:** Why did the Department of Corrections go to one rate for all phone calls?

**Answer:** The reason for moving to one rate for all offender phone calls within the DOC is because the rates in the old system were inconsistent even on local calls. Overall the cost for the majority of the calls is considerably less under the new rate structure. We consider the change a positive one. As in any change of this nature, there will be instances where there will be an increase for certain members of the offender population. But overall, the change benefits the offenders and their families.

**Question:** Why were some facilities changed to 15 minutes for a phone call?

**Answer:** Our facilities were fifteen minutes with only two exceptions. As you can understand, this created problems when an offender moved through the DOC system. Fifteen minutes was selected as the standard for all locations. The rate is \$3.60 plus federal and state taxes (approximately 40 cents) for a fifteen minute phone call anywhere in the United States.

**Question:** Are all calls monitored?

**Answer:** No. Calls to the offender's lawyer(s) are not monitored. The phone number for the lawyer must be identified in advance so it can be placed on the do not monitor list.

**Question:** How does an offender get authorization to make phone calls?

**Answer:** Once the offender has his/her assigned level, they need to fill out a Telephone Number Request Form. This form is at all locations. The form will be processed by Corrections personnel and the offender assigned a PIN.

**Question:** Are some phones better than others for receiving calls?

**Answer:** The quality of the phone and receiving system affect the operation of the offender phone system. A low quality telephone connection can result in termination of the phone call. Landline phones are best for receiving phone calls from the offender phone system. Cell phones can also be used but because of the variance in cell phone reception a good connection cannot be guaranteed. We have seen disconnects of phone calls because of the low quality of the cell phone connection. Internet phone services (Vonage, Magic Jack, etc.) are discouraged from being used for receiving calls. These systems encounter delays and poor quality that result in the call not being connected or after being connected, disconnected.