

## How does slamming happen?

Some telecommunications companies use misleading language or deceptive tactics when dealing with unsuspecting consumers. Frequently these companies offer contests, prizes, surveys, bonus checks, or make confusing/misleading telemarketing calls in an attempt to trick people into changing service.

Other companies don't even bother to trick consumers; they switch the service and hope that the consumer doesn't notice the change.

South Dakota law requires that companies obtain either your written request for a change or a taped verification of your request for a change before a change can be initiated. Violation of this law means that the company must pay the consumer \$1000 for inconvenience and face a fine of up to \$20,000 per incident.



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**South Dakota  
Public Utilities Commission  
State Capitol Building  
500 E Capitol  
Pierre SD 57501  
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Fax: (605) 773-3809  
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# Slamming



**...unauthorized  
switching of  
telecommunications  
service**

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## Protecting Yourself

- **Obtain a PIC freeze** for both instate and out-of-state calling. Contact your local company to request this freeze so that changes cannot be made to your service. A freeze will protect you from MOST changes; however, the freeze will not prevent you from being slammed by a carrier which rents lines from your carrier.
- **Never sign anything without carefully reading** all of the fine print. Just by signing up for a contest or drawing, you may be switching your service.
- **Be cautious with telemarketers.** Make sure you get the real name of the company, the telephone number and name of the person calling you. Make certain you know all the terms

and conditions of the service you are getting. Sometimes telemarketers do not specify which type of service they are marketing, and then will change your local, instate and out-of-state service.

- **Confirm your carrier.** Using the phone line you want to check, call 1-700-555-4141. A recording will tell you which underlying carrier has your line. If the recording gives you the name of an unfamiliar carrier, call your local company. Frequently companies which “resell” other carriers lines are not correctly identified.
- **Check your billing carefully every month.** You may not be aware that your service has changed until something looks different on your telephone billing. If you see a \$5 carrier change charge, your service was switched. Also check to see if there are unfamiliar companies listed on

your billing. If you see a company name that you haven’t authorized, start asking questions.

## Where to go for help:

If you find anything unusual on your billing, make a copy of your billing and send it along with your statement of what is wrong to:

**PUC  
State Capitol Building  
500 E Capitol  
Pierre SD 57501**

We will gladly review your information and pursue your complaint.