

CUB Tips to Slash Phone Bill

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Hear that ring? Consider it a wake-up call if you're paying more than \$25-to-30 a month for land-line phone service.

That's according to the Citizens Utility Board. It's taking aim at what it calls an epidemic of needlessly high phone bills.

CUB President David Kolata says: "Most consumers are paying for calls they don't make. They're paying for services they don't need or want and they're paying too high a permanent rate to do it."

He adds a lot of phone customers get packaged plans that offer unlimited local and long distance calls but when you do the math, he says most people don't make enough calls to justify the price.

Kolata believes: "You're usually better off getting a low cost local phone plan and then for long distance paying a la carte for a company like Pioneer Telephone that charges 2 cents a minute and that's it."

He says packaged plans also include service that you may not use like selective call screening and 3-way calling.

"The bottom line," according to Kolata, is: "If you see something on your bill, you're paying for it whether they suggest you are or not and the question is do you really want it."

Kolata also says avoid Line Backer. It's an \$84-a-year service for phone wire problems that happen, on average, once every 30 years.

And stop using 411. It costs \$1.50-to-\$2 a call. Try services like 1-800-free 411 or googles...Goog411.

CUB says it's saving consumers an average \$575 a year on their home and cell service. All you need to do is pick up the phone.

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