

WAC 480-120-540

Terminating access charges.

(1)(a) Except for any universal service rate allowed pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section, the rates charged by a local exchange company for terminating access service offered by tariff must not exceed the lowest rate charged by the local exchange company for the comparable local interconnection service (in each exchange), such as end office switching or tandem switching. If a local exchange company does not provide local interconnection service (or does so under a bill and keep arrangement), the rates charged for terminating access must not exceed the cost of the terminating access service being provided.

(b) If a local exchange company is authorized by the commission to recover any costs for support of universal access to basic telecommunications service through access charges, it shall recover such costs as an additional, explicit universal service rate element applied to terminating access service.

(2) The rates charged by a local exchange company for terminating access services that are classified as competitive pursuant to RCW [80.36.320](#) or [80.36.330](#) must not exceed the rates charged by the incumbent local exchange company for terminating access service in the comparable geographic area. For purposes of this subsection, the rates charged by the incumbent local exchange company include any universal service rate charged pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section.

(3) The cost of the terminating access must be determined based on the total service long-run incremental cost of terminating access service plus a reasonable contribution to common or overhead costs. Local loop costs are considered "shared" or "joint" costs and must not be included in the cost of terminating access. However, nothing in this rule prohibits recovery of local loop costs through originating access charges (including switched, special, and dedicated as defined in subsection (4)(a) of this section).

(4) Definitions.

(a) "Access charge" means a rate charged by a local exchange company to an interexchange company for the origination, transport, or termination of a call to or from a customer of the local exchange company. Such origination, transport, and termination may be accomplished either through switched access service or through special or dedicated access service.

(b) "Terminating access service" includes transport only to the extent that the transport service is bundled to the end office or tandem switching service. Dedicated transport unbundled from switching services is not subject to subsection (1) of this section.

(c) "Bill and keep" (also known as "mutual traffic exchange" or "payment in kind") is a compensation mechanism where traffic is exchanged among companies on a reciprocal basis. Each company terminates the traffic originating from other companies in exchange for the right to terminate its traffic on that company's network.

(5) The requirement of subsection (1) of this section that any terminating rate be based on cost must not apply to any local exchange company that is a small business, or to any local exchange company that is competitively classified, if it concurs in the terminating rate of any local exchange company that has filed a terminating rate that complies with the requirements of subsection (1) of this section. For the purposes of this subsection, "small business" has the same meaning as it does in RCW [19.85.020](#).

(6) Any local exchange company that is required to lower its terminating access rates to comply with this rule may file tariffs or to increase or restructure its originating access charges. The commission will approve the revision as long as it is consistent with this rule, in the public interest and the net effect is not an increase in revenues.