

**STANDARD COVID-19 RESPONSE FAQ TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDERS  
FOR MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS**

**Answered on 5/14/2020**

**The FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge**

Q. Did OTELCO sign the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge?

**Yes**

Q. When did OTELCO's Pledge period start? When does it end?

**March 16 – May 16**

Q. Does OTELCO plan to extend the Pledge, or portions of the Pledge, at all?

**We have decided not to continue with the Pledge but will informally follow unless business operations require us to take action**

**Shut Offs**

Q. What is OTELCO's shut-off policy during the Pledge time period?

**We have temporarily suspended residential disconnections for non-payment**

Q. How can I qualify to avoid having my service shut off?

**See above.**

Q. Do I need to opt-in to the shut-off part of the Pledge or will I automatically be protected from shut offs?

**You will not be disconnected but account balances will continue to accrue. You should call Customer Service to make a payment arrangement.**

Q. I am behind on my bills, or I know I will not be able to pay my current or upcoming bill by the due date listed on my bill. I am worried my service will be shut off.

Do I need to contact OTELCO to prevent shut off, and if so, how can I contact the company?

**You should contact Customer Service to make a payment arrangement**

Q. My broadband and/or telephone service has been shut off.

How do I get my service turned back on?

**Call Customer Service.**

Q. I am unable to pay my bills during OTELCO's Pledge period.

When will I be expected to pay my unpaid bills once the Pledge period is over?

**You should call Customer Service to make a payment arrangement.**

Q. Will OTELCO offer a payment plan for my unpaid bills beginning now or once the Pledge period is over?

**You should call Customer Service to make a payment arrangement.**

Q. When will OTELCO begin shutting customers' service off again?

**Undetermined**

#### Late Fees

Q. What is OTELCO's late-fee policy during the Pledge period?

**Late fees are being charged**

Q. How can I qualify for waived late fees?

**You must call Customer Service and request a waiver**

Q. Do I need to opt-in to the late-fee waiver part of the Pledge or will my late fees automatically be waived?

**You must call Customer Service and request a waiver**

Q. I am behind on my bills, or I know I will not be able to pay my current or upcoming bill by the due date listed on my bill. I am worried about late fees.

Do I need to contact OTELCO to seek waiver of any late fees. If so, how can I contact the company?

**You should call Customer Service to request a waiver.**

Q. When will OTELCO begin charging late fees again?

**N/A**

### Changes in Broadband/Wireless Service

Q. Has OTELCO made any changes to its data caps or data speeds for my broadband/wireless service?

**No**

Q. I'm worried that I can't pay my broadband/wireless bill by the due date.

Will I experience any change in my data caps or data speeds as a result?

**No**

Q. More people are working from home and communicating online.

Does OTELCO have enough bandwidth to accommodate everyone? Will I experience any service issues as a result of this increased demand?

**We have sufficient bandwidth.**

Q. If OTELCO lowers my data caps or data speeds for any reason during this crisis, will OTELCO notify me?

**N/A**

Q. I am afraid I can no longer afford my current service plan with OTELCO, but I currently have a contract with OTELCO.

Will I be charged any fees for canceling my broadband/wireless service or switching to a less expensive plan?

**N/A**

Q. I need to cancel my broadband/wireless service because I can no longer afford it due to this crisis.

Will OTELCO charge me a reinstallation or reconnection fee if I reestablish service in the future?

**Yes**

### Cable Television **N/A Oteleco does not offer CATV in MA.**

Q. I have cable service with OTELCO.

Does the Pledge apply to cable service as well?

Q. I have bundled cable and broadband and/or telephone service with OTELCO.

If I am unable to pay my bills, will OTELCO shut off my cable service during the Pledge period?

- Q. I live in an area where I cannot get access to digital channels over the airwaves, even with a digital antenna.

Will OTELCO keep me on basic service cable even if I am unable to pay my bills?

- Q. I have bundled cable and broadband and/or telephone service with OTELCO, and I am worried about incurring late fees during this time.

Does the late-fee waiver in the Pledge apply to my bills, even though those include charges for cable service?

- Q. I can no longer afford my cable service plan, but I have a contract with OTELCO for this plan.

Will I be charged any fees for canceling my cable service or switching to a less expensive plan?

- Q. I can no longer afford my cable service plan due to this crisis.

Will OTELCO charge me a reinstallation or reconnection fee if I reestablish service in the future?

- Q. I am still being charged a Regional Sports Fee as part of my cable bill, but no new sports are being broadcast.

Why am I still being charged this fee? Does OTELCO have any plans to reimburse me for this fee?

Cellphone Leasing/Purchase – **N/A Otelco does not provide cell service**

- Q. I currently pay OTELCO a monthly fee for the purchase/lease of my cellphone.

How does the Pledge affect these payments? Am I at risk of losing my cellphone if I cannot pay my bills?

- Q. My monthly cellphone purchase/lease payment is significant, and I am worried I will not be able to pay after the Pledge period is over.

Is OTELCO offering any payment plans related to cellphone purchase/lease amounts that weren't paid during the Pledge period?

- Q. I can no longer afford the monthly fee for the purchase/lease of my cellphone.

Am I able to trade in my current cellphone for a less expensive cellphone, and if so, will I be charged any type of termination or change fee?

Q. I can no longer afford the monthly fee for the purchase/lease of my cellphone.

Can I cancel my wireless service and return my cellphone to OTELCO without incurring any termination fee, change fee, or further monthly fees?

Wi-Fi Hotspots **N/A Otelco does not offer WiFi hotspots**

Q. OTELCO offered to open its Wi-Fi hotspots during the Pledge period.

What does this mean?

Q. How can I locate the Wi-Fi hotspots that OTELCO is making publicly accessible during the Pledge period? Does OTELCO have a map available of all Wi-Fi hotspots?

Low-Income Programs

Q. What current programs does OTELCO offer to low-income customers that need access to broadband and/or telephone services?

**Otelco provided free DSL to anyone not already a customer who had a child at home who qualified for free or reduced lunch. <https://services.otelco.com/en/free-student-internet-covid-19>**

Q. Who qualifies for these broadband and/or telephone low-income assistance programs?

**See above.**

Q. How can I sign up for these broadband and/or telephone low-income assistance programs?

**See <https://www.otelco.com/lifeline-information/>**

Q. Does OTELCO offer any cable service packages for low-income households? If so, what are they?

**N/A**

Q. Does OTELCO participate as a provider in the FCC's Lifeline Program?

**Yes**

Q. What benefits can I receive as a OTELCO customer through the Lifeline Program?

**<https://www.otelco.com/lifeline-information/>**

Q. I am a current Lifeline customer with OTELCO.

Will I be asked to certify or verify my Lifeline eligibility during the Pledge period?

**Otelco is following all rules, including temporary suspensions of existing rules, related to the Lifeline program**

Contacting OTELCO During COVID-19

- Q. What is the best way to contact OTELCO with any questions or concerns during the COVID-19 crisis?

**Call Customer Service at 1-833-683-5261**

- Q. I am worried that customer service phone lines will be overloaded.

Does OTELCO offer live chat or other Internet-based assistance with live customer service personnel?

**We have sufficient personnel to answer phone calls.**

Technical Assistance and Social Distancing

- Q. What precautions is OTELCO taking to maintain social distancing during service calls and at its stores?

**N/A**

Other Assistance Programs

- Q. Is OTELCO offering any other programs or assistance to Massachusetts residents during the COVID-19 crisis? If so, what are they?

**No**

- Q. What steps is OTELCO taking to help educators and students stay connected and to keep students learning during the COVID-19 crisis?

**Otelco provided free DSL to anyone not already a customer who had a child at home who qualified for free or reduced lunch. <https://services.otelco.com/en/free-student-internet-covid-19>**

- Q. What steps is OTELCO taking to help health care workers stay connected to patients and incorporate telemedicine into their practice during the COVID-19 crisis?

**No particular steps.**