

Figure: 16 TAC §26.130(g)(3)

### **Selecting a Telephone Company -- Your Rights as a Customer**

Telephone companies are prohibited by law from switching you from one telephone service provider to another without your permission, a practice commonly known as “slamming.”

If you are slammed, Texas law requires the telephone company that slammed you to do the following:

1. Pay, within five working[business] days of your request, all charges associated with returning you to your original telephone company.
2. Provide all billing records to your original telephone company within ten working[business] days of your request.
3. Pay, within 30 working days, your original telephone company the amount you would have paid if you had not been slammed.
4. Refund to you within 30 working[business] days any amount you paid for charges during the first 30 days after the slam and any amount more than what you would have paid your original telephone company for charges after the first 30 days following the slam.

Your original telephone company is required to provide you with all the benefits, such as frequent flyer miles, you would have normally received for your telephone use during the period in which you were slammed.

If you have been slammed, you can change your service immediately back to your original provider by calling your authorized telecommunications provider (your original provider) and advising the company that you have been switched from its service without appropriate authorization. You should also report the slam by writing or calling the PUCT Consumer Protection Division[Public Utility Commission of Texas], P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326, (512) 936-7120 or in Texas (toll-free) 1 (888) 782-8477, [fax: (512) 936-7003, ]e-mail address: customer@puc.texas.gov[customer@puc.state.tx.us]. Hearing and speech-impaired individuals may contact the commission through Relay Texas[with text telephones (TTY) may contact the commission at (512) 936-7136].

You can prevent slamming by requesting a preferred telephone company freeze from your current service provider. With a freeze in place, you must give formal consent to “lift” the freeze before your phone service can be changed. A freeze may apply to local toll service, long distance service, or both. The Public Utility Commission of Texas can give you more information about freezes and your rights as a customer.