

Explain LATAs.

LATAs (local access and transport areas) were created after the breakup of AT&T in the 1980s to mark the boundaries within which the former Bell companies could transport long-distance calls. Montana is divided into two main LATAs, which roughly divide the state in half from northwest to southwest. The northwest corner of the state, including the Libby, Eureka and Troy area, is in a third LATA (960), which also includes the Idaho Panhandle.

Long-distance calls that originate and terminate in the same LATA are considered intraLATA calls, while calls placed between LATAs are interLATA calls. Calls to another state are interstate interLATA calls. For example, a call from Helena to Missoula is considered an intraLATA call while a call from Helena to Billings is an interLATA call and Helena to Chicago is an interstate interLATA call.

Long distance companies often have different rates for intraLATA, intrastate interLATA, and interstate calls. When you see advertising for long distance rates at 7 cents/minute or 5 cents/minute, most often these rates are for state-to-state calls. Consumers need to be aware of different long distance calling areas (InterLATA and IntraLATA) in order to ask the “right” questions regarding any long distance calling plan they are considering.

See Changing Your Long Distance Carrier for more details on the steps required to select a long distance carrier.

LATA MAP:



Updated April 2011