



Telephone Line Repairs

Picking up your telephone and hearing static or no sound at all can be frightening. Most people take continuous telephone service for granted, and when problems occur, it can be a frustrating experience. The easiest way to locate the source of the problem is by using a Network Interface Device (NID).

A NID is a gray box usually located on the outside of your house, along a rear or side wall at the point where the telephone line enters the house. The NID can help you diagnose whether the problem is within the wiring in your house or in the telephone wiring outside your house.

To determine whether the problem is in the inside or outside wiring, take a working corded telephone out to the NID (a cordless telephone must have electricity to work and many times there is not an outlet near the NID). Snap open the cover of the box or use a screwdriver if necessary. If you encounter trouble opening the box, contact your local telephone company. Within the NID is a test jack for each of your telephone lines. You should test each of them by first removing the plug from the test jack(s). Plug your telephone into a test jack and wait for a dial tone. If you hear a dial tone, dial a local number to determine if you can complete a call.

If your call goes through, the problem is in your home and could be caused by a faulty telephone, jacks or inside wiring. You can repair the problem yourself, hire your local telephone company on a time and materials basis or hire an independent contractor such as an electrician to fix it.

If you hear static or get no dial tone, the problem is most likely in the outside line. Contact your local telephone company and ask them to test the outside line. If they find a problem, they will repair the line at no cost.

Consumers who subscribe to an inside wire maintenance plan should contact their local telephone company. Tenants who reside in an apartment or multi-unit building should call their landlord

before making arrangements for an inside wire repair. Responsibility for the maintenance of inside wire is dictated by local property law.

All homes built after Dec. 31, 1987 were installed with a NID. Houses built before this date may not have a NID. If you encounter a problem with your telephone service, do not have a NID and cannot determine the source of the problem, contact your local telephone company. The company will visit the premises to diagnose the problem at no cost.

At that time, the company will also install an NID at no charge, or make arrangements to install the NID on a return trip. Customers may also install their own NID or hire an independent contractor. You may want to place a lock on the NID in order to prevent

someone from using your line.



Inside-wiring maintenance

Most local telephone companies offer "Inside-Wiring Maintenance Plans." Consumers pay a monthly fee and in return, the companies will repair an inside-wiring problem, when one occurs. Some plans include a replacement telephone.

If you are thinking about signing up for such a plan, gather as much information as possible in order to make a well informed decision. Ask the company exactly what the plan covers and does not cover, if there is a monthly and/or sign-up charge, if they will provide a "loaner" telephone while yours is repaired and how much typical repair charges are if you are not on the plan.

Be aware that inside-wiring problems are relatively rare and only occur once every 20 to 30 years on average. If you multiply the yearly cost of an inside wire maintenance plan by the 20 years you may wait for a problem, the cost may exceed the value of the service.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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