



Collecting fees for telephone booking and ordering - why use of 084 and 087 numbers for this purpose is absurd

Some companies choose to impose fees to recover (some of) the additional cost incurred when taking bookings and orders over the telephone.

When collecting money anyway, it is however totally foolish to do so through the micro-payment mechanism of the “**Service Charge**” component of the charge for calling 084 and 087 numbers.

Use of these numbers for customer service is prohibited by the [Consumer Contracts Regulations](#).

This means that if a customer calls about a purchase already completed, the law demands that their call costs have to be refunded if they called on a 084 or 087 number.

The **fair telecoms campaign** demands that when fees for booking and ordering by telephone are imposed, **this should be done through a surcharge on the money being collected**, NOT through use of a 084 or 087 booking/ordering line.

This is for the following reasons.

• **The Access Charge overhead**

In addition to the “**Service Charge**” fee, an “**Access Charge**” is added by the caller’s telephone company when calling 084/087/09/118 numbers. This is always significant against the limited **Service Charge** (up to **13p per minute**, including VAT) available when using 084 and 087 numbers.

The current range of **Access Charges** is from **9p to 65p per minute** - see [Guide to Call Costs](#).

The maximum benefit available from use of a 084/087 number (**10.83p per minute**) therefore represents only 14% of the maximum cost (**78p per minute**) that may be incurred by a caller. Even the minimum cost (**22p per minute**) returns less than 50% in benefit.

This overhead makes it absurd to collect a booking or order fee in this way.

• **Fairness**

We see fees for booking and ordering by telephone as being valid only when they are ... **justified**, set at a **reasonable level**, **clearly declared** and **able to waived** where necessary.

- Use of the Premium Rate Service indirect micro-payment mechanism cannot be justified when money is being collected in the course of the telephone call, as it is unnecessary.
- A charge which is mostly to the benefit of the caller’s telephone company cannot be said to be set at a reasonable level, in respect of the service which is being provided.
- The variable nature of the “**Access Charge**” makes it impossible to clearly state the level of the fee, when inviting calls to a 084 or 087 number.
- There are many circumstances in which it is necessary and proper to waive a booking or ordering fee. This opportunity is denied when the cost is incurred by initiating the transaction.

Summary

We make the general point - [Now is the time to stop using 084 and 087 telephone numbers](#).

One may readily switch from 084 / 087 to the equivalent 034 / 037 number.

Genuine Premium Rate Services (with any level of “**Service Charge**”) can use 09 numbers.

