

Bundled Cable and other Telecommunications Services

All current cable providers offer bundled telecommunications services: Cable Television, Internet, and Telephone. By ordering all three services from one company, you may save money and consolidate your bills.



Complaints

If you have a problem with your service, e.g. signal strength, pixilation, outage:

- First call your provider — Document your contact by making notes: Who helped you, including customer service rep ID or extension number, date, time, items discussed, and next steps. This will make further follow-up much easier, even though most companies record customer service calls.
- If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, the BACB can help. You can either call (248-336-9445) or fill out a form on our website (www.birminghamareacableboard.org) and the BACB will communicate with your provider and advocate on your behalf to resolve the issue. While the BACB does not exercise any direct control over any aspect of any cable company, all of the cable providers regularly attend board meetings and are responsive to the board and the community.
- You also have the option of contacting the Michigan Public Service Commission in Lansing Monday through Friday, excluding State holidays (1-866-552-7725 or 517-341-6911) and file an informal complaint. Additional information is available online at www.michigan.gov/mpsc under the “Video/Cable” tab.

Current Service Providers

Comcast
1-888-266-2278
www.comcast.com

AT&T U-verse
(In Limited Areas)
1-800-288-2020
www.att.com/u-verse/

WOW
(In Limited Areas)
1-866-496-9669
www.wowway.com

BIRMINGHAM AREA CABLE BOARD

*Serving: Birmingham, Beverly Hills,
Bingham Farms, & Franklin*

Birmingham, Michigan 48012

Cable Comments or Complaints
Phone: 248-336-9445
www.birminghamareacableboard.org

- When choosing your provider, there are several elements to help you select the one which best satisfies your needs.
- **PROGRAMMING:** Occasionally, one provider will offer a unique broadcast channel or channels, but generally, networks seek to obtain the widest distribution possible, and will provide their content to as many cable companies as possible. Nearly all companies bundle channels, so if you really want one channel, you'll likely have to pay for others that you may not watch as much.
 - **PRICING:** Each network charges the cable provider a stipulated fee per household for their programming, so the more channels in your package, the more your monthly fee. Cable providers may also charge rental fees for receivers, with incremental charges for DVR capability, so the more receivers you have, the higher the monthly fee. To entice new subscribers, providers may offer introductory or promotional packages for limited periods, but generally, monthly fees rise at the end of the promotional period.
 - **TECHNICAL ELEMENTS:** Some technologies offer different capabilities with regard to the number of simultaneous High Definition (HD) streams, susceptibility to weather or atmospheric interference, and distance from the main information line, or “backbone”. It is important to note that every system has limitations as well as strengths.
 - **SERVICE:** The best companies are committed to providing excellent service and taking care of their customers. Scheduling appointments at your convenience, setting appointments on a timely basis, calling to confirm appointments, assuring the problem is fixed to your satisfaction and following-up to assure that any issues are resolved are all actions that the better providers do as a matter of normal business.

Evaluation Criteria



Cable Content Offerings

Most providers offer a variety of bundled television programming options. Basic packages generally include local television channels and some popular non-premium cable channels for a nominal monthly fee via standard definition (“traditional 4:3”) television. Providers may offer many “premium” packages with very robust television programming that includes a wide variety of local channels, non-premium and premium cable channels, pay-per-view channels, music, foreign language, high-definition, and 3D channels for significantly higher monthly charges. While most providers tout the number of “High Definition” channels available, digital HD television



is the current normal broadcast and cable mode.

Delivery of standard definition signals continues to shrink and will eventually cease. At this time, no cable provider offers consumers the flexibility to watch only specific channels, also known as “a la carte” pricing: if a consumer wants a specific channel, they must purchase the entire package of channels. Providers package channels differently, so all offerings may not be directly comparable.



Cable Services in the Community

Cable Television is not a monopoly. Since 2007, any cable provider may deliver service to the community upon filing a form with the local municipality under provision of Michigan PA 480. No governmental agency monitors or sets rates, channel line-ups, programming, or service areas. Michigan PA 480 also provides specific penalties for failure to provide service. If there is only one cable provider in your area, it is because for whatever business reasons, no other provider chooses to provide service. Most of our area is served by more than one cable company. AT&T also provides television programming as part of their U-Verse product. Though not a pure cable technology, the programming offered is similar to that provided by cable television providers. AT&T conforms to the same legislative parameters as any cable company.



Telephone: 248-336-9445
www.birminghamareacableboard.org

Our Mission
To advocate for the City of Birmingham and the Villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms & Franklin and their citizens in order to maximize the quality and value of services of cable and related communications providers and support the delivery of public, educational and governmental programming.



Choosing a TV Provider

A Publication of
the Birmingham Area Cable Board