



The Public Utilities
Commission of Ohio



www.PUCO.ohio.gov
(800) 686-PUCO (7826)

Ohio Relay Service

What is the Ohio Relay Service?

The Ohio Relay Service (ORS) provides full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing or speech-disabled. Specially trained Communication Assistants (CA's) process relay calls and stay on the line to relay conversations electronically, over a Text Telephone (TTY) or, in some cases, verbally to hearing parties.

ORS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the number of calls placed or on their length. This valuable communications tool gives all individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing or speech-disabled the opportunity to make personal and business calls just like any other telephone user. Both TTY and voice users may initiate calls through ORS.

Frequently Used Abbreviations

ACSII: computer-generated codes used in processing calls

CA: communications assistant, a person who processes the relay calls and who stays on the line to relay the conversations

GA: stands for "go ahead" which signals the other person that he or she should begin talking

HCO: Hearing Carryover which allows speech-disabled users with normal hearing to listen to the person they are calling even though they are typing their own portion of the conversation

ORS: Ohio Relay Service

TTY: Text telephone

VCO: Voice Carryover which allows deaf or hard-of-hearing people who prefer to use their own voice to speak directly to the party they are calling but will need to have the response typed to them across their TTY screen.

How to Place an ORS Call

- Dial (800) 750-0750.
- Please have the telephone number that you wish to call ready in advance.
- If you would like to use a Communications Assistant (CA) of the same gender, make that request when the CA answers your call.
- Then give the phone number you are calling to the CA.
- Voice users should speak clearly and at a moderate speed.
- Direct your conversation to the party you are calling as if the CA were not present.

(Please note: The CA is required to relay everything that you type or speak and will also relay all background noises. For example, a dog barking or people speaking in the background will be relayed.)

TTY Users Info

You may use a TTY to type your conversation to a Communications Assistant (CA) who then reads the typed message to a hearing person. The CA relays the hearing person's spoken words by typing them back to you. Please remember to type "GA" which stands for "Go ahead" when you are done with a statement and are ready for a response. "GA" will signal to the CA to relay what you have said to the other person.

Voice Users Info

Standard telephone users can easily initiate calls to TTY users by dialing ORS and providing the TTY telephone number. The Communications Assistant (CA) will provide you with instructions if needed. The CA types your spoken words to the TTY user and reads back to you the typed replies. Be sure to talk directly to your caller as if the CA were not relaying your conversation. Please avoid saying, "Tell him" or "Tell her."

Voice Carryover Users Info

Voice Carryover (VCO) allows deaf or hard-of-hearing people who prefer to use their own voice to speak directly to the party they are calling. The Communications Assistant (CA) will type the voiced responses back to the VCO user who can read the typed messages across the TTY screen. When you first contact ORS, let the CA know that you want to use VCO.

Hearing Carryover Users Info

Hearing Carryover (HCO) allows speech-disabled users with normal hearing to listen to the person they are calling. The HCO user types his/her conversation for the Communications Assistant (CA) to read and voice to the standard telephone user. When you first contact ORS, let the CA know that you want to use HCO.

Computer (ASCII) Call Processing

Computer users can also access ORS directly. Set your communications software to the following protocols at speeds ranging from 300 to 2400 baud: (Note: It may be helpful to set your "time out" to 100 seconds.)

- 8 bits
- No Parity
- 1 Stop Bit
- Full Duplex

When calling at a rate of 300 or below, follow the above settings using Half Duplex.

Emergency Calls

In the case of an emergency, TTY users should directly call the TTY-equipped 9-1-1 center or emergency services center in their community. All customers should verify the emergency phone numbers for TTY calls in your area. Remember: calls placed directly and immediately to the local TTY emergency number can save valuable time in urgent situations.

TTY Public Payphones

TTY users who wish to use a coin TTY payphone can use ORS to assist in connecting calls. All local calls are free of charge. Non-local calls may be billed in several ways such as:

- Collect
- Third party
- Calling card or pre-paid card

Billing Preferences

There is no charge for using ORS within your local calling area. Long distance call rates are determined by your carrier of choice. ORS gives you a number of billing options when you place in-state, out-of-state, or international calls. Please notify the Communications Assistant (CA) of your preferred billing options:

- Direct
- Collect
- Person-to-person
- Third party
- Local telephone company calling card
- Long distance telephone company calling card
- Pre-paid card

Directory Assistance

ORS will relay calls to Directory Assistance service to search for the telephone number. TTY users must provide the local Directory Assistance number to ORS. When Directory Assistance provides the number, the caller may choose to place the call through ORS or call direct. Directory Assistance may apply a charge for their service.

International Calls

ORS allows you to place your calls from anywhere in U.S. to anywhere in the world (English or Spanish language only). International calls originating from a foreign country may also use ORS by dialing this special international number first: (605) 224-1837

Spanish Relay Service

ORS now offers Spanish relay service for our Spanish-speaking customers. TTY users can type in Spanish and the conversations will be relayed in Spanish to the called party. In addition, TTY users can also request Spanish to English translation via relay.

To request Spanish relay, type in "area code and telephone number Spanish to Spanish GA" or "area code and telephone number Spanish to English GA."

Ohio Relay Customer Service

Ohio Relay Customer Service is available to answer questions about TTY calls or to receive customer suggestions, comments and complaints. When calling about a specific incident, please remember to provide the Communication Assistant (CA) identification number and the date and time of the call. Customer Service can also provide relay brochures or any additional relay information to customers. Please call the following number to reach customer service: (800) 325-2223 TTY/Voice

Does ORS have any additional relay features?

Yes, the following are additional features you may wish to use:

- Answering Machine Retrieval
- Branding
- VCO with Privacy
- Two-Line VCO
- VCO to TTY
- VCO to VCO
- HCO to HCO

Answering Machine Retrieval

TTY users can request ORS to retrieve messages from their voice answering machines or voice mail. To request answering machine retrieval, type in "AMR with instructions or password the GA", the Communications Assistant (CA) will type "PLS PLACE YOUR HEADSET NEXT TO YOUR ANSWERING MACHINE AND TURN ON GA". Place your headset on the speaker part of the answering machine and watch the answering machine number or light indicator, you will know when all the messages have been retrieved, then place the headset back on the TTY and type "GA". The CA will type your messages.

Branding

VCO, HCO, TTY, ASCII, Deaf-Blind TTY, Deaf-Blind ASCII and Voice users may request permanent branding through ORS. With branding, the Communications Assistant (CA) uses your preferred answer type automatically when processing your call. To request permanent branding, inform the CA on line to set it up or contact ORS Relay Customer Service at (800) 325-2223 to assist you. Branding is not available for PBX numbers.

VCO with Privacy

This is similar to the standard VCO feature. However, the Communications Assistant (CA) will not hear your voice and only types the hearing person's responses back to the VCO user. If you do not want the CA to listen to your voice, tell the CA you want "Privacy On."

Two-Line VCO

Two-Line VCO allows a customer with two telephone lines to use one line for speaking directly to a hearing person while the other line is used to receive the hearing person's typed responses at the same time. This feature provides a more natural flow of conversation without the pauses of single-line calls.

VCO to TTY

The Communications Assistant (CA) will only type what the VCO user says to the TTY user. Whatever the TTY user types will go directly to VCO user's TTY or Text display equipment for you to read.

VCO to VCO

VCO users can contact other VCO users through ORS. The Communications Assistant (CA) will serve as both parties' "ears" and type not only what you say to your party but also what is said to you.

HCO to HCO

HCO users can contact other HCO users through ORS. The Communications Assistant (CA) will voice to both parties what is typed on each user's TTY.

If you would like to know more about the PUCO or have utility-related questions or concerns,

contact the PUCO at:

(800) 686-PUCO (7826)

(800) 686-1570 (TDD/TTY)

In Columbus only:

(614) 466-3292

(614) 466-8180 (TDD/TTY)

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