

Dispute Resolution**General Overview**

This section describes the process and procedures for correctly filing a dispute claim with AT&T. While AT&T has established defined controls in the daily and bill period processing of CLEC bills, a CLEC may feel it is has been incorrectly charged on its bill. For these CLECs, AT&T has set up a standard process that will allow the CLEC to file a claim disputing a charge or charges. Upon receiving the claim, AT&T will evaluate it and provide an appropriate response in a timely manner.

Generally, the dispute process takes sixty days from the date of receipt to complete. However, the following are examples that may cause AT&T to close the dispute and notify the CLEC. It may also cause AT&T to deny the claim because it was unable to determine all of the issues surrounding the charges in dispute:

- Not providing enough information on the dispute claim form
- Providing inaccurate information on the dispute claim form
- Submitting a duplicate dispute claim form
- Sending the dispute claim form to the wrong center

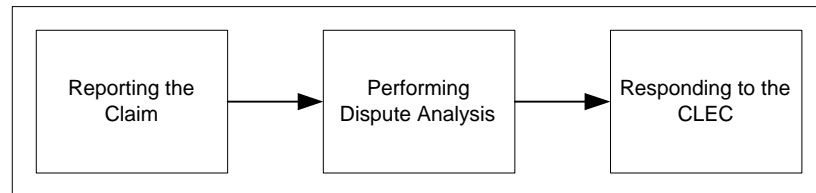
Each of these delays can prolong the dispute resolution process. A CLEC should recognize that its actions in completing a dispute claim form could directly impact the results of the process and the length of time it takes to complete the process.

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Process Steps

The dispute resolution process is divided into three sub-processes:

- Reporting the Claim – the activities involved in correctly submitting a dispute claim to AT&T's Billing and Collections organization.
- Performing Dispute Analysis – the activities followed by the Service Representative to properly identify the charges in dispute, analyze the claim, and decide on the appropriate resolution.
- Responding to the CLEC – the activities involved in informing the CLEC of the actions AT&T intends to take regarding the dispute in question.

**Reporting the Dispute**

The process for disputing a charge involves two activities:

- Completing the Billing Adjustment Request (BAR) Form.
- Submitting the BAR form to the correct AT&T Center

Obtaining the BAR Form

A CLEC can obtain a copy of the BAR form from the following WEB site:
<http://www.wholesale.att.com/forms/html/billing&collections.html>

Completing the BAR

When a CLEC has identified a charge that it intends to dispute, it must complete the BAR form. This form, when received, notifies AT&T that a charge is being disputed and provides the relevant information associated with the claim.

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**Submitting the
BAR to the
Correct Center**

Identifying the correct center to submit the BAR form is important in resolving the dispute quickly. If the BAR form is submitted to the wrong center, it may cause delays in the time necessary for AT&T to resolve the dispute. At AT&T, the Billing and Collection centers that process the dispute claims are organized by service type. These service types are:

- Resale
- Unbundled Network Elements (UNEs)
- Equal Access
- Local Interconnection

Note: Switched Access and Special Access apply only to Interexchange Carriers.

When completing the BAR form, the CLEC should select the appropriate service as it relates to the charge it is disputing (i.e., Resale for disputes related to Resale charges and UNE for Loop or Port charges). The service selected by the CLEC determines which center the CLEC will need to contact. AT&T maintains contact information (i.e., e-mail address, phone number, and address) for each of the service type centers described above. A CLEC can obtain this information at the Web site listed below:

<http://www.wholesale.att.com/forms/billing&collections.html>

The preferred method for submitting the BAR form to the appropriate service type center is by e-mail. However, AT&T will also accept BAR forms via fax or U.S. mail.

AT&T will provide an auto response of receipt to any BAR form submitted by e-mail.

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**Performing
Dispute Analysis**

After receiving the BAR form, AT&T assigns it to a service representative in the order it was received. The service representative checks for accuracy and completeness of fields 1 through 20 on the BAR form. If these fields are inaccurate or incomplete the dispute claim will be closed and sent back to the CLEC. If the BAR form passes the initial review, it will be logged into the appropriate tracking system and processed by AT&T's service representatives.

The activities involved in analyzing the dispute claim may involve sampling or screening the charges. Ultimately, the service representative will review all available information (i.e., contracts, customer service records, and bills) to determine the appropriate resolution to the dispute. Occasionally, the service representative may need to contact the CLEC to clarify some of the information provided. In any case, several resolution scenarios may occur. Depending on the outcome of his/her investigation, the service representative may reject the dispute claim, make a partial adjustment, or make a full adjustment to the CLEC's non-recurring, recurring, or usage parts of the bill.

**Responding to
the CLEC**

Whether a decision is made to make an adjustment or deny the claim, the service representative will notify the CLEC (via the BAR form) and close the dispute claim in the appropriate tracking system. The service representative is responsible for completing fields 24 through 37 of the BAR form with the relevant information and returning the dispute claim via e-mail, fax, or U.S. mail to the CLEC.

**Service Center
Contacts**

AT&T maintains contact information for each of the service type centers. A CLEC can obtain this information at the Web site listed below or by contacting its AT&T Account Team Member:

<http://www.wholesale.att.com/forms/billing&collections.html>

**Adjustments to
the Bill**

If it is determined that an adjustment to the CLEC's bill needs to be made, typically the adjustment will appear on the following bill period after resolution. When an adjustment is made three days or less before the close of the billing period, the credit/debit may not appear on the next CLEC bill. However, the credit/debit should appear no later than the second bill period after the adjustment.

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**Late Payment
Information**

Regardless of the outcome of the dispute claim, a CLEC is responsible for full payment of all services billed monthly prior to the next billing date. A late payment charge according to the terms of each state's General Subscriber Service tariff will be applied to the CLEC's bill when the previous month's bill has not been paid in full prior to the next billing date. If an adjustment is made, any late payment charge billed on the disputed amount will also be adjusted. If an adjustment is not made, the CLEC will be liable for all late payment charges.

**CLEC End
User Contact**

The CLEC is responsible for submitting all dispute claims to AT&T. If a CLEC's end-user should submit a dispute, the end-user will be referred to his/her serving CLEC. AT&T will not process any billing disputes that are filed by the CLEC's end users.

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