

# Telephone Taxes

**RCW** 82.14B.030, 80.36.430, and 43.20A.725(5)

**Tax Base** Telephone access lines.

Tax exemptions may reduce the tax liability for this tax base. For more information, refer to the [Tax Exemption Study](#).

**Tax Rate** Switched Access Lines & Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

- State Enhanced 911 (E911) tax rate is a maximum of 25 cents per month per line.
- County E911 tax rate is a maximum of 70 cents per month per line.

Radio Access Lines (Wireless)

- State E911 tax rate is 25 cents per month per line, except for prepaid wireless which is subject to a rate of 25 cents per retail transaction.
- County E911 tax rate is a maximum of 70 cents per month per line, except for prepaid wireless which is subject to a maximum of 70 cents per retail transaction.

The State E911 Coordinator recommends the state tax rates for switched access and VoIP lines to the Utilities and Transportation Commission, and the Commission formally determines the rate for the following year.

**Recent Collections (\$000)**

Fiscal Year	Collections	% Change	% of All State Taxes
2018	\$26,256	1.5%	0.1%
2017	\$25,860	2.4%	0.1%
2016	\$25,249	0.4%	0.1%
2015	\$25,158	-6.1%	0.1%
2014	\$26,774	-21.0%	0.2%
2013	\$33,906	6.4%	0.2%
2012	\$31,874	-0.3%	0.2%
2011	\$31,976	9.0%	0.2%
2010	\$29,326	1.2%	0.2%
2009	\$28,983	-2.5%	0.2%

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<b>Distribution of Receipts</b>	<p>Receipts from the State E911 tax are deposited into the State E911 account and are used to fund the State 911 program.</p> <p>Receipts from the County E911 tax are deposited into the County E911 account and are used to finance county emergency services communication systems.</p>
<b>Levied by</b>	State and counties.
<b>Administration</b>	<p>Department of Revenue.</p> <p>Telephone companies and retailers of prepaid wireless services collect and remit both the state and county taxes to the Department.</p>
<b>History</b>	<p>2014 Beginning January 1, 2014, collection of prepaid wireless E911 taxes was moved from individual telecommunication providers to the retailers that sell prepaid wireless services. Retailers of prepaid wireless services may charge an additional five cents per transaction as compensation for collecting the E911 taxes through June 30, 2018.</p> <p>2013 Telephone assistance tax (WTAP) and telephone relay service tax (TRS) were eliminated and replaced by biennial general fund appropriations.</p> <p>2011 Department of Revenue is responsible for administration of both state and county E911 excise taxes. VoIP lines were included in tax base for both state and county E911 excise taxes. The maximum state E911 excise tax rate increased to \$0.25 and the maximum county E911 excise tax rate increased to \$0.70.</p> <p>2004 Responsibility for collecting the TRS and WTAP taxes transferred to the Department of Revenue.</p> <p>2002 The state tax was extended to wireless telephones and the maximum rate of the county tax on wireless lines was increased to 50 cents. Responsibility for collecting the state E911 telephone tax transferred from the State Military Department to the Department of Revenue.</p> <p>1994 The county tax on wireless lines was authorized by the Legislature at a maximum rate of 25 cents per line.</p>

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- 1991 The state E911 excise tax was approved by the voters (Referendum 42) effective January 1, 1992, with a maximum state rate of 20 cents per switched line, to ensure funding for the implementation of an E911 telephone system on a statewide basis.
- 1987 The TRS tax which funds telephone services for persons with hearing difficulties was established at a maximum rate of 10 cents per switched line. The WTAP tax that funds telecommunication services for low-income households was also adopted in 1987 at a maximum rate of 16 cents per switched line. Both taxes administered by the Department of Social and Health Services. The county legislative authority was permitted to levy the county tax on behalf of an emergency service communication district which could serve an area less than countywide.
- 1981 The county tax on switched telephone lines was authorized; the tax had to be imposed on a countywide basis.
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