

**THE MICHIGAN PENAL CODE (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 328 of 1931**

**750.219a Obtaining telecommunications services with intent to avoid charge; violation; separate incidents pursuant to scheme or course of conduct; enhanced sentence based on prior convictions; definitions.**

Sec. 219a. (1) A person shall not knowingly obtain or attempt to obtain telecommunications service with intent to avoid, attempt to avoid, or cause another person to avoid or attempt to avoid any lawful charge for that telecommunications service by using any of the following:

- (a) A telecommunications access device.
- (b) An unlawful telecommunications access device.
- (c) A fraudulent or deceptive scheme, pretense, method, or conspiracy, or any device or other means, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
  - (i) Using a false, altered, or stolen identification.
  - (ii) The use of a telecommunications access device to violate this section by a person other than the subscriber or lawful holder of the telecommunications access device under an exchange of anything of value to the subscriber or lawful holder to allow that unlawful use of the telecommunications access device.

(2) A person who violates subsection (1) is guilty of a crime as follows:

(a) If the total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained is less than \$200.00, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00 or 3 times the total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained, whichever is greater, or both imprisonment and a fine.

(b) If any of the following apply, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 1 year or a fine of not more than \$2,000.00 or 3 times the total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained, whichever is greater, or both imprisonment and a fine:

(i) The total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained is \$200.00 or more but less than \$1,000.00.

(ii) The person violates subdivision (a) and has 1 or more prior convictions for committing or attempting to commit an offense under this section or former section 219c or a local ordinance substantially corresponding to this section or former section 219c.

(c) If any of the following apply, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 5 years or a fine of not more than \$10,000.00 or 3 times the total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained, whichever is greater, or both imprisonment and a fine:

(i) The total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained is \$1,000.00 or more but less than \$20,000.00.

(ii) The person violates subdivision (b)(i) and has 1 or more prior convictions for committing or attempting to commit an offense under this section. For purposes of this subparagraph, however, a prior conviction does not include a conviction for a violation or attempted violation of subdivision (a) or (b)(ii).

(d) If any of the following apply, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 10 years or a fine of not more than \$15,000.00 or 3 times the value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained, whichever is greater, or both imprisonment and a fine:

(i) The total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained is \$20,000.00 or more.

(ii) The person violates subdivision (c)(i) and has 2 or more prior convictions for committing or attempting to commit an offense under this section. For purposes of this subparagraph, however, a prior conviction does not include a conviction for a violation or attempted violation of subdivision (a) or (b)(ii).

(3) The values of telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained in separate incidents pursuant to a scheme or course of conduct within any 12-month period may be aggregated to determine the total value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained.

(4) If the prosecuting attorney intends to seek an enhanced sentence based upon the defendant having 1 or more prior convictions, the prosecuting attorney shall include on the complaint and information a statement listing the prior conviction or convictions. The existence of the defendant's prior conviction or convictions shall be determined by the court, without a jury, at sentencing or at a separate hearing for that purpose before sentencing. The existence of a prior conviction may be established by any evidence relevant for that purpose, including, but not limited to, 1 or more of the following:

- (a) A copy of the judgment of conviction.
- (b) A transcript of a prior trial, plea-taking, or sentencing.
- (c) Information contained in a presentence report.

(d) The defendant's statement.

(5) If the sentence for a conviction under this section is enhanced by 1 or more prior convictions, those prior convictions shall not be used to further enhance the sentence for the conviction pursuant to section 10, 11, or 12 of chapter IX of the code of criminal procedure, 1927 PA 175, MCL 769.10, 769.11, and 769.12.

(6) As used in this section:

(a) "Telecommunications" and "telecommunications service" mean any service lawfully provided for a charge or compensation to facilitate the origination, transmission, retransmission, emission, or reception of signs, data, images, signals, writings, sounds, or other intelligence or equivalence of intelligence of any nature over any telecommunications system by any method, including, but not limited to, electronic, electromagnetic, magnetic, optical, photo-optical, digital, or analog technologies.

(b) "Telecommunications access device" means any of the following:

(i) Any instrument, device, card, plate, code, telephone number, account number, personal identification number, electronic serial number, mobile identification number, counterfeit number, or financial transaction device as defined in section 157m that alone or with another device can acquire, transmit, intercept, provide, receive, use, or otherwise facilitate the use, acquisition, interception, provision, reception, and transmission of any telecommunications service.

(ii) Any type of instrument, device, machine, equipment, technology, or software that facilitates telecommunications or which is capable of transmitting, acquiring, intercepting, decrypting, or receiving any telephonic, electronic, data, internet access, audio, video, microwave, or radio transmissions, signals, telecommunications, or services, including the receipt, acquisition, interception, transmission, retransmission, or decryption of all telecommunications, transmissions, signals, or services provided by or through any cable television, fiber optic, telephone, satellite, microwave, data transmission, radio, internet based or wireless distribution network, system, or facility, or any part, accessory, or component, including any computer circuit, security module, smart card, software, computer chip, pager, cellular telephone, personal communications device, transponder, receiver, modem, electronic mechanism or other component, accessory, or part of any other device that is capable of facilitating the interception, transmission, retransmission, decryption, acquisition, or reception of any telecommunications, transmissions, signals, or services.

(c) "Telecommunications service provider" means any of the following:

(i) A person or entity providing a telecommunications service, whether directly or indirectly as a reseller, including, but not limited to, a cellular, paging, or other wireless communications company or other person or entity which, for a fee, supplies the facility, cell site, mobile telephone switching office, or other equipment or telecommunications service.

(ii) A person or entity owning or operating any fiber optic, cable television, satellite, internet based, telephone, wireless, microwave, data transmission or radio distribution system, network, or facility.

(iii) A person or entity providing any telecommunications service directly or indirectly by or through any distribution systems, networks, or facilities.

(d) "Telecommunications system" means any system, network, or facility owned or operated by a telecommunications service provider, including any radio, telephone, fiber optic, cable television, satellite, microwave, data transmission, wireless, or internet based system, network, or facility.

(e) "Unlawful telecommunications access device" means any of the following:

(i) A telecommunications access device that is false, fraudulent, unlawful, not issued to a legitimate telecommunications access device subscriber account, or otherwise invalid or that is expired, suspended, revoked, canceled, or otherwise terminated if notice of the expiration, suspension, revocation, cancellation, or termination has been sent to the telecommunications access device subscriber.

(ii) Any phones altered to obtain service without the express authority or actual consent of the telecommunications service provider, a clone telephone, clone microchip, tumbler telephone, tumbler microchip, or wireless scanning device capable of acquiring, intercepting, receiving, or otherwise facilitating the use, acquisition, interception, or receipt of a telecommunications service without the express authority or actual consent of the telecommunications service provider.

(iii) Any telecommunications access device that has been manufactured, assembled, altered, designed, modified, programmed, or reprogrammed, alone or in conjunction with another device, so as to be capable of facilitating the disruption, acquisition, interception, receipt, transmission, retransmission, or decryption of a telecommunications service without the actual consent or express authorization of the telecommunications service provider, including, but not limited to, any device, technology, product, service, equipment, computer software, or component or part, primarily distributed, sold, designed, assembled, manufactured, modified, programmed, reprogrammed, or used for the purpose of providing the unauthorized receipt of, transmission of, interception of, disruption of, decryption of, access to, or acquisition of any telecommunications service provided by any telecommunications service provider.

(iv) Any type of instrument, device, machine, equipment, technology, or software that is primarily designed, assembled, developed, manufactured, sold, distributed, possessed, used, or offered, promoted, or advertised, for the purpose of defeating or circumventing any technology, device, or software, or any component or part, used by the provider, owner, or licensee of any telecommunications service or of any data, audio, or video programs or transmissions, to protect any such telecommunications, data, audio, or video services, programs, or transmissions from unauthorized receipt, acquisition, interception, access, decryption, disclosure, communication, transmission, or retransmission.

(f) "Value of the telecommunications service obtained or attempted to be obtained" includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Any lawful charge for telecommunications services avoided or attempted to be avoided.

(ii) The value of any other money, property, or telecommunications service lost, stolen, or rendered unrecoverable by the violation.

(iii) Any actual expenditure incurred by the victim to verify that a telecommunications device or telecommunications access device or telecommunications service was not altered, acquired, damaged, disrupted, destroyed, or stolen as a result of the violation.

(iv) The value of all telecommunications services available to the violator and others as a result of the violation.

**History:** Add. 1961, Act 93, Eff. Sept. 8, 1961;—Am. 1967, Act 255, Eff. Nov. 2, 1967;—Am. 1996, Act 330, Eff. Apr. 1, 1997;—Am. 1998, Act 312, Eff. Jan. 1, 1999;—Am. 2002, Act 672, Eff. Mar. 31, 2003.