

Instructions for Using Voice Carry Over (VCO) Relay

VCO relay is an option for people with hearing loss significant enough to prevent them from hearing and understanding conversations clearly over the telephone. Using VCO relay and a specially designed telephone with a text display, a VCO user can speak directly to the other person on the call. The communication assistant (CA) facilitates the conversation by typing the other person's spoken words to the VCO user. The text of the other person's conversation appears on the VCO users specialized telephone equipment.

To use VCO relay you must have either a TTY (text telephone) or a specially designed VCO telephone.

The term "GA" or "go ahead" is important for VCO relay calls for turn taking purposes. "GA" insures that the VCO user and the standard phone user do not respond at the same time and miss each other's communication. When you see "GA", you will know that it is your turn to speak. The same is true for the CA and standard phone user, who will not respond until you say "GA."

VCO User Placing a Call Through Relay

Making VCO calls using a TTY

1. Your TTY *should not* be in ASCII mode when making a VCO call.
2. Place your telephone handset on the TTY and dial the VCO Direct number: **1-877-627-3024**.
3. Minnesota Relay will answer and will give the CA identification number and gender. The CA will type "VOICE (OR TYPE) NOW GA."
4. Pick up the handset and speak to the CA providing the area code and telephone number for the person you wish to call, followed by "GA." Place the handset onto the TTY immediately after saying "GA."
5. When the CA indicates that the call has been connected, pick up the handset and speak to the other person. When you are ready for the other person to respond, say "GA" and place the handset back on the TTY.
6. The CA types the response of the other person for you to read on your TTY screen. Turn-taking continues in this manner until the call is complete.
7. If you would like to make another call, don't hang up. The CA will remain on the line after you have disconnected from your initial call. Simply tell the CA that you would like to make another call and provide the phone number.

NOTE: If you prefer to keep the handset in one position for speaking rather than moving it to and from the TTY, you can use a Y-jack or line splitter. This allows the TTY and the telephone to be connected on the same line. The handset can remain in one position (either at your ear or holding it as a microphone), allowing you to speak into the phone and read the text with greater convenience.

Making VCO calls using a VCO phone

1. Dial the VCO Direct number: **1-877-627-3024**.
2. Minnesota Relay will answer and will give the CA identification number and gender. The CA will type "VOICE (OR TYPE) NOW GA."
3. Provide the CA with the area code and telephone number for the person you wish to call, followed by "GA."
4. The CA types the response of the other person for you to read on your VCO phone's text screen. Turn-taking continues in this manner until the call is complete.
5. If you would like to make another call, don't hang up. The CA will remain on the line after you have disconnected from your initial call. Simply tell the CA that you would like to make another call and provide the phone number.

VCO User Receiving a Call Through Relay

When people want to reach you by phone, they can call you through Minnesota Relay by dialing 7-1-1 or 1-800-627-3529. If you haven't completed a *Minnesota Relay Customer Preference form* indicating how you will answer incoming Minnesota Relay calls, you will need to answer incoming calls in one of two ways:

Answering voice first

1. Pick up the handset and say "This is a VCO call GA." (If you are using an TTY without a Y-jack or line splitter, you must put the handset into the TTY immediately after you say "GA".)
2. The CA will send her/his identification number and gender, followed by "VCO on GA."
3. You may then speak directly to the caller, using "GA" to take turns.
4. The CA types the response of the other person for you to read on your text screen. Turn-taking continues in this manner until the call is complete.

Answering TTY first

1. Place the handset onto your TTY (unless you are using a VCO phone or Y-jack/line splitter) and type "VCO PLS GA." NOTE: if you have a VCO phone, simply press the VCO MSG button, which sends a recorded VCO prompt.
2. The CA will send her/his identification number and gender, followed by "VCO on GA."
3. You may then speak directly to the caller, using "GA" to take turns.
4. The CA types the response of the other person for you to read on your text screen. Turn-taking continues in this manner until the call is complete.

Two-Line VCO

This enhanced relay feature offers you more control and allows for interactive conversation without the use of "GA" or "go ahead" instructions. You can respond in real time, and even interrupt, rather than wait for the other person to say "GA." Unlike typical relay calls, the CA does not identify the relay and is present only to type the voice of the standard telephone user.

Two-line VCO requires the following equipment:

- TTY or VCO phone
- Voice telephone with its own telephone number
- 3-way conference calling feature on the voice line (contact your local telephone company for information).

If you would like an instruction sheet on how to make and receive two-line VCO calls, please contact the Minnesota Relay Consumer Relations Office at 1-800-657-3775 or visit our Web site at www.mnrelay.org.

Voice Carry Over with Privacy

This is similar to standard VCO. However, the CA will not hear the VCO user speaking, and only serves to type the other person's response back to the VCO user. The VCO user does not need to say "GA" when they are finished speaking, but they **must type** "GA" in order to bring the CA back on line to continue relaying the other person's response. The other person will be heard by the CA and must say "GA" each time he/she is finished speaking. ***You must request VCO with privacy at the start of your call.***

9-1-1 Emergency Calls

When making emergency calls, dial 9-1-1 directly without using Minnesota Relay. All

9-1-1 centers are equipped to handle TTY calls. Minnesota Relay can process emergency calls, but doing so may result in a delay in getting your call through.

Information Regarding Long Distance Calls

The long distance carrier you have chosen for your home service is NOT automatically applied to Minnesota Relay calls. To make sure your long distance Relay calls are carried and billed through your existing long distance service or calling plan, it is recommended that you submit a *Minnesota Relay Customer Preference form*. You may also inform the CA of your preferred carrier of choice prior to placing a long distance relay call.

If no carrier is indicated, long distance Minnesota Relay calls will be carried and billed by Sprint.

Importance of Completing a Customer Preference Form

A Customer Preference form allows you to customize your Relay call. By completing and submitting a *Minnesota Relay Customer Preference form* the Relay is able to store your call preferences in their database. This will allow your Relay calls to be set up quickly, and ensures that your preferred carrier is used for long distance calls.

Call 1-800-657-3775 to request a *Minnesota Relay Customer Preference form*, or download the form at www.mnrelay.org.

Tips for Using VCO Relay

- Do not start speaking to the CA until you see “VCO ON GA” on the screen.
- The CA can not hear you until the CA turns on the VCO feature. It is very important to wait for the “VCO ON” confirmation.
- The CA turns off VCO while the other person is speaking and will not hear you (the VCO user) until the “GA” is given.
- When connecting with the CA, please do not press any other keys. Doing so will send TTY tones to the CA and may cause confusion about which call method you want to use (TTY or VCO).
- Every time a VCO call is placed, the CA will ask the person being called if she/he is familiar with Voice Carry Over. If the person is not, the CA will explain how VCO works before the call begins.
- There are no restrictions on the length of your calls or the number of calls you make.

Filing a Complement or Complaint

If you would like to file a complement or complaint regarding Minnesota Relay, please call 1-800-657-3775 (voice/TTY). You will need to provide the date and time of the Relay call, the CA’s identification number and the nature of your complement or complaint.

You may also file a relay complaint with the Federal Communications Commission by calling 1-888-225-5322 (voice)/1-888-835-5322 (TTY) or on line at www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html.

**For information on other services offered through Minnesota Relay
or to schedule a free presentation, please contact:**

Minnesota Relay Consumer Relations Office:

1-800-657-3775

E-mail: mnrelay@state.mn.us

Visit our Web site: www.mnrelay.org