

service that was the subject of the theft has a value of more than \$300, the maximum penalty is a \$1,000 fine or imprisonment for 15 years, or both.

556. DIVULGING CONTENTS OF MESSAGES.

(A) IN GENERAL.

(1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, "TELEGRAPH COMPANY" AND "TELEGRAPH LINES" HAVE THE MEANINGS STATED IN TITLE 1 OF THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANIES ARTICLE.

(2) A CLERK, OPERATOR, MESSENGER, OR OTHER PERSON CONNECTED IN ANY CAPACITY WITH A TELEGRAPH COMPANY OR TELEPHONE COMPANY, OR WITH INDIVIDUALS OPERATING TELEPHONE LINES OR TELEGRAPH LINES FOR PROFIT IN THE STATE, MAY NOT:

(I) WILLFULLY DIVULGE THE CONTENTS OR NATURE OF THE CONTENTS OF A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION THAT IS ENTRUSTED TO THE PERSON FOR TRANSMISSION OR DELIVERY; OR

(II) WILLFULLY REFUSE OR NEGLECT TO TRANSMIT OR DELIVER A PRIVATE COMMUNICATION.

(B) PENALTY.

A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$500 OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 3 MONTHS OR BOTH.

REVISOR'S NOTE: Chapter 8, Acts of 1998, which enacted the Public Utility Companies Article, also added this section. Subsection (a)(1) of this section is new language added to conform to the terminology of the Public Utility Companies Article. Subsections (a)(2) and (b) are derived without substantive change from former Art. 23, § 324 and Art. 27, § 556.

In the introductory language of subsection (a)(2) of this section, the former reference to "corporation" is deleted as unnecessary as included in the reference to "company".

In subsection (b) of this section, the former references to on conviction "before any court having criminal jurisdiction" and imprisonment "in the jail in the county or city where such conviction shall be had" are deleted as surplusage.

Also in subsection (b) of this section, the former reference to "in the discretion of the court" is deleted as surplusage.

557A. DEVICES TO AVOID CHARGES.

(A) DEFINITIONS.

(1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.