

Bell System Introduces TRIMLINE Telephone

A sleek, new telephone with the dial built into the handset will be introduced by the Bell System during the next year and a half. Called the TRIMLINE® telephone, the new model is designed to make calling easier by incorporating the receiver, transmitter and dial in a lightweight handset.

On August 2nd, Michigan Bell Telephone Company will become the first company in the Bell System to offer the new telephone. The phone will be introduced gradually on a company-by-company basis to allow an orderly expansion of the TRIMLINE production line at Western Electric Company, manufacturing and supply unit of the Bell System. By 1967, the TRIMLINE phone is expected to be available at extra charge to customers served by virtually all Bell companies.

With the TRIMLINE phone, the caller brings the dial to him. A recall button located beside the dial clears the line between calls so they can be made one after the other without reaching to hang up. The handset fits snugly into the base when not in use hiding the dial, receiver and transmitter so the phone looks like an attractive piece of sculpture.

The TRIMLINE phone was developed by Bell Telephone Laboratories. Henry Dreyfuss was design consultant. The result of years of research by Bell Laboratories, the new phone has a base measurement of only 3 inches x 8 inches and takes up less than half the space required by conventional phones.

The TRIMLINE phone handset has a balanced, contoured shape designed to make it rest comfortably in the palm of the hand instead of being gripped like a standard handset. A narrow ridge runs the length of the handset so it can be picked up by the fingertips. Although it is equipped with dial and recall button, it weighs only two ounces more than the standard handset.

Specially designed slopes on the base of the desk model guide the handset into the right position when a caller hangs up—even if he hangs it up backwards. On the wall set, special fins near the top of the base not only guide the handset into hang-up position, but serve to hold the handset in an off-hook position when a user wishes to leave the phone briefly during a call.

In order to build the dial into the handset, Bell Telephone Laboratories developed a smaller dial that is easy to see and operate. The key to the smaller size is a movable finger stop that eliminates the space between the one and the zero found on standard dials. The fingerwheel holes on the dial remain the same size as on a standard dial although the diameter of the TRIMLINE phone dial is almost $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch less.

On the new dial, the letters have been made more readable by arranging them in a straight line over the numbers instead of in the familiar semicircle. The dial lights when the phone is in use, making the figures easy to read. A small light bulb built into the dial is designed to last for years. In addition, improvements in the moving parts of the dial make dialing smoother and quieter. Grip feet on the base of the phone prevent slipping or sliding. A lever on the base adjusts the bell volume from loud to soft.

Because there's no need to reach for the base when dialing, the TRIMLINE phone can be kept in places that would be awkward for standard phones. The wall model, for instance, can be installed in a variety of convenient but out-of-the-way locations such as under a kitchen shelf or in the space between work counters. The desk model can be kept on a shelf, in a wall niche, or on any small, flat surface.

The lightweight, balanced TRIMLINE handset contrasts sharply with the telephone installer's phone that inspired the dial-in-handset concept. Three stages of the phone's development include the installer's handset, the "Shmoo," and the TRIMLINE handset.

