

Phone workers told: Don't go behind tree

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(Published Aug. 10, 1999)

If Pacific Bell has its way, urinating in the woods could become a thing of the past.

The telephone company's employees who travel to remote sites to service equipment used to simply seek out the nearest tree.

Now, Pacific Bell supplies them with a bag called Brief Relief and urges the workers to use the high-tech, sealable bag, which turns the urine to gel and makes it safe to throw in the trash.

You won't find the company boasting about it. Even Pacific Bell's spokeswoman was at a loss for words.

"We're encouraging our employees -- I don't know how to say this -- to not go behind a tree," said Alison Costa of Pacific Bell, which employes 55,000 people in California. "We're providing an option to be environmentally and ecologically sensitive in remote areas."

The disposable bag is also used by workers in manholes and in busy areas without public toilets.

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