

Porting: Keeping Your Phone Number When You Change Providers

If you're switching service providers and remaining in the same geographic area, you can keep your existing phone number. This process – often referred to as phone number porting – can be done between wireline, IP and wireless providers.

Getting the porting process started

You may request service from a different company at any time. When changing companies:

- Review your current contract. Your contract may contain early termination fees and/or outstanding balances that you are obligated to pay.
- Do not terminate your service with your existing company before initiating new service with another company.
- Contact the new company to start the process of porting your number.
- Provide the new company with your 10-digit phone number and any additional information required.

Are there fees for porting?

- Companies may charge you to port your number.
- Once you request service from a new company, your old company cannot refuse to port your number, even if you owe money for an outstanding balance or termination fee.

How long does the porting process last?

FCC rules require simple ports, which generally do not involve more than one line or more complex adjustments to telephone switching equipment, to be processed in one business day. You may be able to use your phone within a few hours for changes among wireless service providers. However, porting from wireline to wireless service may still take a few days.

Service issues for wireline to wireless transition

If you port from a wireline phone to a wireless phone, there may be a period when you have two telephones with the same number. Ask your new wireless company whether you will be able to continue using your current wireline number during the one-day transfer process.

Wireless 911 location and callback services (where available) may be affected during the transition. Calls should go through, but 911 operators may not be able to call you back if disconnected. Before porting, ask your new company if your 911 service will be affected during the process.

Also, your wireline long distance company will not move with you. Your long distance service will likely be provided by your new wireless company, which you should verify.

Porting is not always

possible

If you are moving to a new geographic area, you may not be able to keep your current phone number when changing providers.

Also, some rural wireline service providers may obtain waivers for the porting requirement from state authorities. Their customers may be unable to port their number to a new provider. If you are unable to port your number for that reason, contact your state public utilities commission for further information.