



Number Portability:

The Facts About Keeping Your Telephone Number When Switching Providers

What is number portability?

Telephone number portability enables consumers to keep their existing local telephone number when switching from one telephone provider to another.

Switching numbers

Currently, there are four ways that consumers can switch telephone providers and keep the same number.

- **Landline to Landline** – Consumers are able to keep the same home telephone number when switching from one traditional local provider to another.
- **Landline to Cellular** – Some consumers have made the decision to go wireless for all of their telephone service needs, but wish to take their home telephone number with them. Consumers now have the flexibility to transfer their home telephone number to a cellular phone. However, several smaller companies in Ohio are not required to transfer a home number to a cellular phone.
- **Cellular to Cellular** – Consumers are able to keep the same cellular number when switching from one cellular provider to another.
- **Cellular to Landline** – Consumers can transfer a cell phone number to a traditional landline telephone.



Tips to consider

Consumers who wish to keep their telephone number when switching should be aware that:

- Service should not be canceled with their existing carrier before signing up with a new company. The new company will contact the consumers' existing carrier to terminate the existing agreement to ensure there is no break in service.
- Number portability may not be available with emerging technologies such as VoIP. Before switching to a VoIP provider (including cable), check to make sure that you can port your number to the provider and that you can take your number with you should you choose to switch again.
- Most landline numbers can be switched to another provider as long as the consumer is staying in the same area. Cell phone numbers may be transferred between providers only within the same metropolitan area. For example, wireless customers in Toledo may not be able to transfer their number to a carrier in Dayton. Consumers should ask whether their cellular number can be switched to a new cellular carrier since this service may not be available by some telephone companies that serve rural areas.
- The switch between providers may take anywhere from a few hours to a few days to complete. Ask the new provider the length of time it will take for the switch to occur. For landline to landline or cellular to cellular switches, it could be a matter of hours. Landline to cellular switches tend to take longer – up to several business days.
- When switching between cellular carriers, consumers should remember that they might be subject to early termination fees. Consumers

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should contact their carrier and review their current agreement to determine if this applies to them. When switching between landline carriers, consumers may be subject to a switching fee, also known as an installation fee.

- A copy of a recent telephone bill from the current company is needed to ensure that the new carrier will have the exact information it needs to make the switch.
- If consumers switch from a landline to a cellular provider, their current long-distance carrier will need to be notified and the long-distance service canceled. Most cellular providers have long-distance features built into their plans.
- Cellular providers usually require consumers to purchase a new cellular phone when signing up for new service. Some cell phones are only compatible with one specific provider.

OCC can help

For more information on choosing a local or long-distance provider, understanding your telephone bill, choosing a cell phone plan or other utility issues, contact the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel toll free at 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) or online at www.pickocc.org.



The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts. The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues and resolves complaints from individuals. To receive utility information, brochures, schedule a presentation or file a utility complaint, residential consumers may call 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free in Ohio or visit the OCC Web site at www.pickocc.org.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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