

Wireless Local Number Portability FAQs

Telephone customers in many parts of Ohio are now able to transfer their telephone number when they switch from one wireless carrier to another or from their wireline carrier to a wireless carrier. This service is known as wireless local number portability (WLNP).

What is WLNP?

WLNP allows consumers to keep their wireless phone numbers when switching to another carrier within their local geographic area. Initially, this means you will be able to keep your wireless phone number when you switch from one wireless carrier to another. WLNP also allows consumers to keep their wireline phone number when switching to wireless service in some cases.

WLNP does not allow consumers to keep the same phone number when moving outside their local geographic area.

What do I need to do if I want to take advantage of WLNP?

Consumers should first contact their prospective new provider. Do not cancel your existing service with your current provider until you have made arrangements with a new provider. Once the port has been completed, you should confirm the cancellation of service with your old provider and finalize your account.

Your new provider will need to know information about your existing account. If you have a copy of a bill from your current provider, it will help to ensure that the personal account information needed to port your phone number is correct (for example, your name as it appears on the bill, address, account number, and phone number). Before the port is finalized, ask the provider to verify your phone number to ensure that the correct number is ported.

Will I be charged a fee for porting my number?

The FCC permits wireless carriers to recover the costs of implementing WLNP by assessing fees to all their customers. These fees may appear as a monthly line item on your wireless bill. A wireless carrier may also charge you an additional fee when you request to port your number.

Several carriers have already begun including line-item fees for WLNP on their customers' monthly bills, ranging from a few cents to a little over a dollar. The FCC does not regulate the amount of these fees, but the amount must be just and reasonable.

You should check with your wireless carrier to see if any fees for porting will be charged before you decide to port your number.

If I am signed into a long-term contract, will I still have to pay early termination fees if I port my number to a new carrier?

If you switch carriers before your contract expires, you may be charged an early termination fee by your old carrier. Check your contract before you switch to see if an early termination fee applies. A wireless carrier cannot refuse to allow you to take your phone number to another carrier even if you are still settling your account with them.

Will I have to purchase a new phone?

Depending on your new carrier's network and service features, you may need to purchase a different phone. Wireless phones purchased from one carrier are often incompatible with another carrier. This is the case whether or not you choose to port your phone number or not.

Can I port my wireline phone number to a wireless carrier?

The FCC requires wireline carriers to port phone numbers to wireless carriers in cases where the wireless carrier's coverage area (the area in which wireless service can be received from that carrier) overlaps the rate center in which the wireline phone number is assigned. Check with your prospective wireless carrier to see if wireline-to-wireless porting is available to you.

If you port a number from a wireline phone to a wireless phone, your wireline long distance carrier will not move with you. Your new wireless carrier will generally provide your long distance service.

How long will it take to port my number?

The FCC has not yet set any mandatory time frames. The FCC does however encourage wireless carriers to complete a simple port with another wireless carrier within two and one-half hours. The process may take longer, and you may experience a delay in receiving calls, but you should be able to make calls with your new provider. Your provider will be able to explain this process to you in more detail.

A wireline to wireless port will probably take longer to complete, and could take several days. Before porting between wireline and wireless phones, consumers should ask their new service provider how long the process will take.

If you decide to cancel the number port while it is in progress, you may not be able to have that number returned to the service you were porting from. If you cancel your service on the number you are porting before the port goes through, you may also lose the number.

Will I be able to make a 9-1-1 call during the porting process?

Yes, you should be able to make 9-1-1 calls during the porting process. However, be aware that if emergency services need to call you back, your call may be routed through your original carrier. Therefore, if you need to make an emergency call during the porting process, be sure to inform the operator of the exact nature of the emergency and also your precise location.

Will any other services be affected if I port my number from a wireline to wireless phone?

If you port from a wireline to wireless phone, your telephone number listing will be removed from the database that supports 4-1-1 information services and most published telephone directories, both printed and online.

Internet access that is dependent on a wireline (dial-up or high-speed DSL) will not be available should you port from a wireline to wireless phone.

How can the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's (PUCO) help?

The PUCO has been a strong advocate for wireless local number portability and is available to consumers as a source of information on the issue. You may contact the PUCO at the numbers listed below.

What do I do if I have a complaint involving WLNP?

Contact the FCC to register your complaint.

E-Mail: fccinfo@fcc.gov

Web: www.fcc.gov/cgb/NumberPortability/

Phone: (888) CALL-FCC, (888) 225-5322

TTY: (888) TELL-FCC, (888) 835-5322

FAX: (866) 418-0232

If you would like to know more about the PUCO or have utility-related questions or concerns,

contact the PUCO at:

(800) 686-PUCO (7826)

(800) 686-1570 (TDD/TTY)

In Columbus only:

(614) 466-3292

(614) 466-8180 (TDD/TTY)

www.PUCO.ohio.gov

Updated January 3, 2011