

Prepaid Phonecards

How can I contact ComReg?

By phone (LoCall): **1890 229 668**
(9.00am to 5.30pm) Monday to Friday

By fax: **(01) 804 9671**

By email: consumerline@comreg.ie

Our websites are:

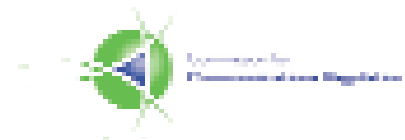
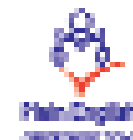
www.comreg.ie / www.askcomreg.ie / www.callcosts.ie

By post: **ComReg Consumer Team, Irish Life Centre
Block DEF, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1**



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August 2007



Prepaid phonecards

Many people in Ireland use prepaid phonecards to make calls. In general the phonecards, when supplied through a reputable service provider, work well and allow users to make savings on phone calls to different countries. However, we are aware of growing concerns that there are some phonecards that fail to meet expectations.

In this guide, we:

- explain how phonecards work; and
- list the things to be aware of when buying a phonecard.

How do phonecards work?

Phonecards are prepaid calling cards, which you buy for a set price, usually starting at €5. Details of how the service works are normally printed on the card, but in general:

- you dial either a freephone number or a local number shown on the card;
- when prompted, you enter your PIN number - generally under a 'rub out' panel on the card and unique to the card; and
- when prompted, you enter the number you wish to reach and the call will be connected.

Where can I use my phonecard?

Phonecards work off any touch-tone phone, which means that you can use them from your home phone, a public payphone or your mobile phone.

Are there any hidden charges?

The call rates by destination are usually displayed where you buy the card, but you may have to pay surcharges when using the phonecard in a public payphone or on a mobile phone.

In addition, service providers may charge a 'minimum call charge' or a 'set-up charge'. These charges are generally stated in the small print and will vary between providers.

What to be aware of when buying a phonecard

- Read the terms and conditions for the use of the card - these should be on the card itself or on notices displayed where you buy the card.
- Check the price list and pay particular attention to the small print for additional charges such as a daily charge if the card is not used.
- Check whether minimum call charges apply and whether the call charges are per second or per minute.
- Check if the supplier has provided contact details.
- Check and see if there is a customer support number in case the card does not work.
- Check if there is an expiry date on the card.
- Check whether you can confirm the credit balance (the amount of money left to spend on calls).

What should retailers be aware of when selling phonecards?

Retailers should satisfy themselves that the supplier of any phonecards is legitimate. If a phonecard does not work, the retailer is responsible for dealing with the buyer's complaint. The retailer will then have to pursue the matter separately with the supplier.

Are phonecard companies approved by ComReg?

Phonecard companies do not need our permission before they supply phonecards to the Irish market.

What should I do if my phonecard does not work?

If your phonecard does not work, complain to the retailer where you bought it.

What are my rights if the call charges are higher than advertised?

You should complain to the service provider using the contact information displayed on the card or complain to the retailer.

Other consumer organisations

Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland

Phone: (01) 660 8766

European Consumer Centre

Phone: (01) 809 0600

Office of the Director of Consumer Affairs

Phone: 1890 220 229