

Use text messages instead of calls. It is usually cheaper to send text messages than to make voice calls. There is no charge for receiving text messages in most countries, so you can avoid the cost associated with incoming calls by encouraging usual callers such as friends and family to send you texts before you leave.

Consider changing from a pre-pay service to a pay monthly service

Roaming tariffs on pre-pay options are more expensive than those available on pay monthly services. If you use your phone a lot while abroad, you might take this into account when looking at the overall cost of using your phone.

You should consider the long-term cost of a pay monthly contract before switching from pre-pay. Use www.callcosts.ie for an independent guide to selecting the best value option suited to your usage.

Peak and off-peak rates

Off-peak rates can be cheaper than peak rates when roaming abroad, but check this with your operator before travelling. You should also note that peak and off-peak times in the country you are visiting may differ from Ireland's peak and off-peak times. Some operators offer a flat rate if you roam using the preferred network in the country you are visiting.

Use a pay phone and phone card

You could choose to use a local pay phone to make calls, but make sure you check rates first. Your phone calls may be cheaper if you use a pre-paid phone card.

Contacting customer care

Ask your operator before travelling if it supports direct dial short codes (generally a four digit number) from abroad to contact its customer care department. If it does not, make sure you obtain an alternative contact number before you travel. Depending on where you are and the network you are using, you may have to dial the international code for

Ireland (+ 353) followed by the operator's full telephone number to contact customer care. Please note that calls to your operator's customer care department are charged at the same price as calling Ireland.

Network selection

Your mobile phone has two options for connecting to your choice of mobile network - manual network selection or automatic. Always use the manual option when travelling to enable you to choose the cheapest foreign network. Check your mobile handset guide for instructions on manual network selection or contact your operator's customer care department.

Voicemail

Know how to use your voicemail abroad. As with contacting customer care, the usual short code may not work. You need to be aware of the alternative means of accessing voicemail. Contact your mobile phone operator for details before travelling.

Topping up

If you are a pre-pay customer, make sure your account is topped up before you travel, as it may be difficult or impossible to top it up while abroad.

Emergency services

In EU countries, the contact number for emergency services is 112. You should check locally for the relevant number elsewhere. In the USA and Canada use 911.

ComReg and international roaming

We offer price information and more detailed advice at www.askcomreg.ie. The European Commission has recently proposed new laws that aim to regulate the cost of roaming within European Union countries. You can read these proposals, which are at an early stage, at www.ec.europa.eu.

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

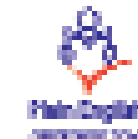
By post: **ComReg Consumer Team, Irish Life Centre
Block DEF, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1**

Mobile Roaming



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Mobile roaming - frequently asked questions

With the growth in travel, more and more people are using their mobile phone abroad. In early 2006, we carried out a survey and found that 52% of Irish consumers who travelled abroad knew only a little about roaming costs.

In this guide, we:

- give you tips to help you before you begin your journey;
- explain how to save money when you are roaming;
- describe 'inadvertent roaming' and how to avoid it; and
- direct you to our international roaming charges web pages.

What is international roaming?

International roaming is the ability for you to use your mobile phone abroad. For this to happen, your mobile operator enters into agreements with mobile networks abroad. When you use your phone abroad, your mobile phone connects to a local mobile network. The foreign network provider sends your operator a bill (known as a wholesale charge) for your usage. Having added its costs, your operator then charges you for your usage while abroad. International roaming agreements are quite complicated and wholesale charges can vary.

Things to note about mobile phone 'roaming'

- In most countries you can choose which mobile network you want to roam on.
- Call charges may vary depending on the mobile network you choose and charges while roaming are a lot higher than those at home.

- You will pay to call your Irish mobile operator's customer care line while abroad.
- You will pay for receiving calls while abroad.
- You will be charged to listen to your voice messages.
- Peak and off-peak call times on foreign mobile networks may be different from those of your Irish mobile operator.
- You may have to pay for your calls in different increments. For example, you may have to pay per minute instead of per second.
- Minimum charges will apply in most cases.
- If you are a pre-pay customer, you may be able to see the roaming charges if your mobile operator offers free bill itemisation on line.

What is 'inadvertent roaming'?

This is when the signal from a mobile phone is picked up by a different network without your knowledge. This can occur close to an international boundary, for example the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland.

Why does inadvertent roaming occur?

Roaming generally happens when the signal of a Northern Ireland network is stronger than that of your own network. Your phone may be set to automatically connect to the strongest available signal. Because radio signals do not observe borders, this can happen even if you do not cross the border. If this happens, you will probably have to pay higher call charges. You may also be charged for receiving calls. Depending on what mobile phone you use, the screen may display 'UK' along with the name of the network to which the phone is now connected.

How can I avoid inadvertent roaming?

Disable 'automatic network selection' on your mobile handset. On your mobile phone you can choose to either automatically select a network or manually choose one. If you disable 'automatic network selection', your mobile phone can

only connect to a different network if you choose to do so. Your handset user guide has instructions on how to change the setting from 'automatic network selection' to 'manual network selection'.

Consider adopting a price plan that offers discounts on an all-Ireland basis. Some mobile operators offer 'tariff plans' that offer discounts and savings on an all-Ireland basis. Some plans are free, but some require an additional monthly payment.

Do I need to pay charges if my phone inadvertently roams?

If your phone is set to 'automatic network selection' and it does inadvertently roam, you must pay the resulting mobile bill.

Reduced roaming charges

Some mobile operators have introduced a free opt-in service where you can pay much lower charges while in Northern Ireland. You should contact your operator or check its website to see if it provides this service. Remember to always check the terms and conditions.

Roaming - what to do before you travel

Before travelling, consult your operator's website and if necessary its customer care department to find out:

- whether your contract allows international roaming,
- how much it will cost to use your phone in the country you are visiting,
- which network offers the cheapest roaming rates,
- which name will be displayed on your phone for that network, and
- how to set up other important services (such as voicemail, call diverts and network selection).

Tips for using your mobile phone while abroad

Using your mobile phone abroad is more expensive than at home, but this should not stop you from keeping in touch with family and friends if you take practical steps to minimise charges.

Know which network is best for you.

When you switch on your mobile phone abroad or when you move around, your phone may automatically select a network that is not the cheapest option for you. To avoid this, set your phone to manually select a network from those available. This will enable you to personally select the network that is the best value for you. You should also be aware that not all networks that your handset detects may be available to you, as your mobile operator may not have a roaming agreement with them.

Always use the cheapest network abroad.

Your operator's website and customer care department can give you the most up-to-date information on costs before travelling and can let you know the cheapest network to use when abroad. In early 2006, we launched a new tariff guide to help consumers understand the cost of making and receiving calls and texts in a number of countries such as United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Italy, USA, Germany, Greece and Turkey. We chose these countries because of their popularity among Irish travellers. We plan to include more countries over time. By having the applicable costs available to intending travellers, we hope that you will be able to choose the local operator that best suits your needs. Log on to www.askcomreg.ie/roaming to check out the network availability and prices in these countries.

Be aware of voicemail costs.

You should decide whether to use voicemail or not. Be aware of the costs of calls diverted to voicemail and of accessing messages.