

## Why does my current provider send me a letter when I have changed to a new provider?

Your existing provider sends you a letter to check that you have consented to the change. You only need to respond to the letter if you have not chosen to switch provider.

Once you switch providers, your previous provider cannot contact you to offer services unless you expressly told them they could do this when you were their customer. If you did permit this contact and have since changed your mind, you can inform them that you do not want any further contact.

## What can I do if my service has been moved without my consent?

If this has happened, you should contact the new provider to ask when, how and from whom it was authorised to take over your service. Ask for a copy or record of this authorisation. If you are not satisfied that authorisation was given, contact the ComReg consumer line.

If you want to return to your original provider, you will need to contact it yourself and give your Universal Account Number (UAN). You will need to ask the new provider for this, even if it took over your service without your consent.

## Do I have to change my phone number?

No, in most cases you can keep your phone number. This facility is known as 'number portability' and it enables customers to keep their telephone number regardless of which phone service provider they use.

There are three types of number portability: geographic, non-geographic and mobile.

- Geographic number portability lets any land line customer move their telephone number(s) to any other available service provider.

- Non-geographic number portability lets customers transfer their non-geographic number service (one that does not need a local area code, such as a freephone, lo-call or VoIP number).
- Mobile number portability lets mobile customers keep their mobile number regardless of which provider they use.

## Will my service be interrupted during the changeover?

No, any switch to a new provider should be seamless.

## What happens if I change my mind?

Contracts usually have a 'cooling off period', within which you can change your mind. This period is covered by European Union Distance Selling Regulations. In Ireland, the National Consumer Agency checks that providers obey these regulations.

Depending on how you entered into a contract with a new provider, you may have at least 7 days to change your mind. The cooling off period can begin when you enter into a service contract or when you receive written confirmation of the contract, whether in a letter, fax or e-mail. If you change your mind, you can contact the new provider and it will cancel the contract. Make sure that you give your instruction in writing so that it can be verified later if needed.

The regulations do not prohibit a service provider from taking over a service within the cooling off period. So although you are allowed to cancel without any penalties during the period, you will have to pay for any phone and/ or broadband you used during this time.

## What happens if I change my address but want to keep my service provider?

Simply contact your provider and they will tell you what to do.

## Is the service provider allowed to change a contract?

Yes, the law allows your service provider to change the terms and conditions of its service, including its prices. However, it must notify you of the changes at least one month in advance and tell you that you have the right to end the contract without penalty within the month if you do not accept the change(s).

## What happens if I have a fault on my land line?

If there is a fault on your line, contact your new provider. It will arrange for an engineer to fix the problem. Regardless of the provider, all consumers should receive the same level of service when it comes to fault repairs.

## What if I have a complaint?

Your service provider will provide a copy of its code of practice when you take up the service or direct you to where you can download a copy. This contains all the details about how to make a complaint.

## What if I am not happy with how my complaint was handled?

If you are not satisfied after going through the provider's full complaint handling process, contact ComReg on (01) 804 9668 or 1890 229 668\*.

\*Calls to 1890 numbers from landlines are charged at a local call rate. Charges from mobile phones may vary depending on your service provider.

## How can I contact ComReg?

By phone: (01) 804 9668 or 1890 229 668\*  
(9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday)

By fax: (01) 804 9680

By email: [consumerline@comreg.ie](mailto:consumerline@comreg.ie)

By post: **ComReg Consumer Team**

**Irish Life Centre, Block DEF, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1**

Our websites are:

[www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie) / [www.askcomreg.ie](http://www.askcomreg.ie) / [www.callcosts.ie](http://www.callcosts.ie)

# Guide to phone and broadband contracts and switching



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A wide range of service providers now offer land line, mobile and broadband services to consumers. If you are with one provider, another one may offer a better value service or range of services to better meet your needs. We have prepared this guide to:

- give you advice on switching phone and/or broadband providers, and
- tell you the main points to be aware of when entering into a contract.

### What should I check before I switch?

- Visit our website [www.callcosts.ie](http://www.callcosts.ie) to check the best price on offer for your individual needs. The website is free, up to date, easy to use and independent and covers most telephone, mobile and broadband plans available in Ireland. It also has links to providers' terms and conditions for each price plan and their code of practice for handling complaints.
- Contact your service provider or consult your terms and conditions to check:
  - your minimum contract period,
  - whether you are required to provide notice of cancellation, and
  - if any early penalties apply for ending your current contract.

If you are unsure who might be your current service provider for various types of call, you can dial the following numbers from the phone in question to hear a recorded message that identifies them:

- 19822 for local calls,
- 19801 for national calls, and
- 19800 for international calls.

### What information do I need to switch provider?

You will need to know your Universal Account Number (UAN). For your home phone, the UAN should be on a recent bill. For example, if you are switching from Eircom, you will use your Eircom account number (EAN). If you plan on switching your mobile phone service provider, the account number is the same as your mobile number.

### What questions should I ask alternative service providers before I switch?

- Can I see the customer code of practice and standard terms and conditions of the contract?
- What is the minimum contract period and what happens when the minimum contract period is up? Does the contract continue?
- What happens if I want to end the contract before the minimum period is up?
- Can I have a printed price list?
  - Do I have to spend a minimum amount per month?
  - Are there any special discounts available?
  - Is there a minimum charge or a set-up charge for each call I make?
  - How are calls charged – per second, per 30 seconds or per minute?
  - Are there any extra charges such as connection fees?
  - What are the peak and off-peak times?
- Where can I get up-to-date prices?
- How will you notify me if prices or any other contract terms are changing?
- How can I get a copy of your disconnection policy?
- How can I pay the bill?
  - Do I have to pay by direct debit?
  - How often will I get a bill?
  - Can I get a paper bill?
  - Can I see my bills online?

- How long will it take to change over?
- Do I need to do anything about my other services such as voicemail and call-barring?

**Important: If you are simply asking for more information about the service, do not sign any forms or give your account details.**

### What should I look for in a contract before I sign it?

As a consumer, you are entitled by law to have a contract. This contract must at least state:

- the name and address of the service provider;
- the services provided, any standards for service quality and waiting periods for first connections;
- the types of maintenance service offered;
- details of prices and tariffs and how to get up-to-date information on tariffs and maintenance charges;
- the length of the contract and the conditions for renewing or ending it;
- information on any compensation and refund arrangements if the provider does not meet service standards; and
- details of how to complain and take action to settle disputes.

ComReg's role does not include approving actual terms and conditions of a contract, so it is up to you to decide whether or not to accept them.

If you do not accept the terms on offer, do not enter into the contract. If the contract does not cover the items listed above, raise it with your service provider. If you are not satisfied with the service provider's response, you can then refer the matter to ComReg.

### Signing up to a service

Once you decide to take up a particular phone and/or broadband service, you can enter into a contract with a service provider in one of three ways.

- You can agree over the phone, without signing any forms or other documents. The service provider will use a person called a verification agent to check with you that you are happy to go ahead with the contract. Once you have verified (confirmed) this with them over the phone, your contract is binding. If the verification agent works for the service provider, this checking process is called Voice Customer Authorisation (VCaf). If the agent is independent of the service provider, the process is known as Third Party Verification (TPV).
- You can sign a 'Customer Authorisation Form' (CAF). This form is the traditional way of entering into an agreement. You must be satisfied that you fully understand the form, and the service on offer, because once you sign it, you are making a binding contract with the service provider. You can sign the CAF on paper or a digital device (at your door).
- You can fill in an online version of the Customer Authorisation Form (eCAF), usually on the service provider's website. Once you do, you create a binding agreement, so we recommend that you record the details you enter and what you have signed up to.

No matter how you enter a contract, the provider should tell you what to do if you change your mind.

### Do I have to tell my existing provider that I am switching?

In general, you do not need to tell them unless your current contract requires you to give them cancellation notice. Check the terms and conditions of your current contract to see if

this is required and see the following different situations.

#### If you want to move your phone and broadband service to the same provider

You do not need to cancel any broadband service before switching. Just contact your preferred new provider.

#### If you want a phone and broadband service for the first time

Simply contact the provider that you would like to provide the service.

#### If you are switching from a dial-up internet service to broadband from a new provider

The broadband will not automatically replace the dial-up internet service, so you will need to cancel the dial-up separately if you no longer need it.

#### If you want to move your phone service to one new provider and your broadband service to another new provider

If you are planning to get broadband through your telephone line, you need to switch to the new phone service provider first. You will get a new account number, which you will need when switching broadband provider.

**Note: Some phone service providers will not allow customers to take up broadband from a different provider. Make sure you check this when researching your options.**

If you no longer want phone and broadband services If your phone line and broadband services are from different providers, you need to contact each provider separately to cancel your contract. You should cancel your broadband service before your phone service.