

What Consumers Need to Know about Wireless Number Portability

- **All Portability is Local.** "Local" portability means that you can only take your number to a new carrier that serves the same location as your current carrier. In other words, you can't port your number from one metro area to new carrier in another city hundreds of miles away.
- **Is Your Town In the Top 100?** Wireless number portability is only available in the 100 largest U.S. metro areas as of November 24, 2003. Some carriers may offer portability in smaller markets next spring. If you live in a smaller town, you will not be able to port your wireless number until next year.
- **Prevent A False Start.** Don't start by canceling service with your current provider – or you might lose your number. Start with the carrier you want to switch to. Your new carrier will then contact your current provider to transfer your phone number.
- **Know Your Current Contract.** Review the terms of your current contract. You may be subject to an early termination fee if you cancel your existing service before a certain amount of time.
- **The Devil is in the Details.** Your new carrier will need to know specific information about your existing account. So for convenience, bring your most recent monthly bill when you go to transfer your phone number. If you don't have a copy of your bill, be sure to bring the exact details of your account, such as your name as it appears on the bill, your billing address, account number and current phone number. If any of that information is misspelled or written incorrectly on your application, your number transfer could be delayed significantly.
- **Find a New Phone and A New Plan That Fits.** You may need a new phone when you switch carriers, even if you are keeping your number. Wireless carriers offer a wide variety of feature-filled devices and numerous service plan options. Get to know the various rate plans, coverage areas and special features, so you can make the choice that's best for you.
- **Plan for a Process.** When you go to a retail store to transfer your phone number to a new carrier, schedule plenty of time to fill out the necessary application forms, choose your new phone and rate plan, and possibly wait while other consumers do the same. Millions of customers are expected to port their phone numbers in the first few days it becomes available. So, there may be long lines at some stores and porting during the first few weeks may take a few hours, or even days.