

Comparison Guide to Telephone Service

	Traditional Wireline	Wireless	Cable -Based	Internet-based
How do they provide service?	Use underground and/or aerial wire facilities.	Use a combination of radio and wired facilities.	Use a local cable TV company's network.	Use broadband connections. (DSL/satellite signal)
Can the service be used in multiple locations?	No	Yes	No	Yes
Billing?	Flat Rate service (unlimited local calls for one monthly rate), or Measured Rate service (local calls billed on per-call basis).	Prepaid or monthly plans are available. Also, unlimited calling plans. Charges may be incurred for all calls. Usage over a plan's limit may be billed at a higher rate; some companies allow unused minutes to roll over to the next month. roaming charges may apply outside the service plan's home calling area.	Flat Rate service (unlimited local calls for one monthly rate), or Measured Rate service (local calls billed on per-call basis). Generally offers bundled service, which can include cable and/or Internet access, along with telephone service. Stand alone telephone service may also be available.	Offers two plans: (1) pre-set number of minutes; (2) unlimited monthly calling.
Do activation charges apply?	Yes	Yes	Yes, but not always.	Yes
Is a contract required?	No, but deposit may be required.	Yes, on non-prepaid plans. Early termination fees may apply.	No	No, but required credit card billing.
Is 911 Service available?	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes*
Service Termination?	Service can be terminated for failure to pay charges due, after written notification. Partial payments are applied to local service charges. Reactivation charges usually apply.	Service can be suspended or terminated without notice, at any time for any reason. Reactivation charges may apply.	Most companies will notify you in writing if there is an overdue balance and provide a date by which the payment must be made to avoid disconnection. Reactivation charges do apply.	Service may suspended or terminated usually without written notification if any charges for services are unpaid for any reason. Reactivation charges may apply.
Can I keep my number if I change service?	Yes**	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do government taxes and fees apply?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Will service be affected during a power outage?	No, but cordless phones, which rely on an electrical connection, will not operate.	No, but only if the cellular phone is charged and cell towers are not affected. The battery may be charged through a car accessory outlet.	Yes, but some companies provide a battery backup so service will continue to function for a few hours.	Yes

* Limited

** If you stay within the same exchange.

Additional Phone Features



	Wireline	Wireless	Cable	Internet
Long Distance	X	X	X	X
Call ID	X	X	X	X
Call Waiting	X	X	X	
Call Forwarding		X	X	X
Voicemail	X	X	X	X
Call ID Blocking	X	X	X	X
Anonymous Call Rejection	X		X	X
Text Message		X		



Cal Phone Info

California Public Utilities Commission
Telecommunications Education for Californians

If you need help with a dispute about your telecommunications service or bill, first contact your phone company. If your issue is not resolved, you can file a complaint online at: www.calphoneinfo.com or call the **Consumer Affairs Branch and Utility Fraud Hotline** at: **1(800) 649-7570**

