



Porting a Landline Number to VoIP: Order of Steps

Get a business phone number with a simple auto attendant menu from Auto Attendant. A caller picks who they need and the call rings that person's own mobile, so nobody on your team has to publish a personal number.

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Why a landline number needs more care than a mobile

Most business owners who have moved a mobile number remember it as quick. A business landline that has been on the same copper line for twenty years is a different job: the account often carries several lines and features, the records behind it are old, and the number may share an account with internet, TV or an alarm line. None of that stops you from keeping the number, but it changes the order in which you do things.

This guide is for owners and office managers moving a traditional phone-company number to an internet-based (VoIP) service in the United States or Canada. It is educational, not legal advice, and reflects the rules as of October 2026. It does not promise how long your port will take; the carriers set the date.

Can the number move at all?

United States. The FCC says that if you switch providers and stay in the same geographic area, [you can keep your existing number, and porting can be done between wireline, IP and wireless providers](#). The same guide notes two limits: if you are moving to a new geographic area you may not be able to keep the number, and some rural wireline providers may have waivers from state authorities, in which case their customers may be unable to port and should contact their state public utilities commission. The legal basis is [47 U.S.C. 251\(f\)\(2\)](#): a local carrier with fewer than 2 percent of the nation's subscriber lines may ask its state commission to suspend or modify duties that include number portability. Whether your carrier has such a waiver is a state-by-state question.

The VoIP side is covered too. Under [47 CFR 52.35](#), "intermodal ports" expressly include ports involving interconnected VoIP service, and the FCC's 2009 porting order recalls that interconnected VoIP providers are obligated to [take all steps necessary to initiate or allow a port-in or port-out](#), directly or through their numbering partner.

Canada. The picture is less automatic. The CRTC applied the local number portability obligation to **local exchange carriers providing local VoIP services in Telecom Decision 2005-28** (as summarised in Telecom Decision CRTC 2016-345, 26 August 2016). In Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-11 (1 February 2008), it kept the requirement that VoIP providers port numbers *out*, but said numbers **may be ported in at a VoIP service provider's discretion**. The CRTC's consumer page accordingly lists landline to VoIP among the cases where **you might need to get a new phone number**, along with moving to a different province or local calling area.

The practical consequence for a Canadian business: get written confirmation from the VoIP provider that it can bring in your specific number before you sign anything or change anything on the old account.

Why landline ports are slower and pickier

The rule distinguishes simple from non-simple ports. In the US, a simple wireline-to-wireline or simple intermodal port must be completed within one business day, and a non-simple one within four business days, **unless the new provider or customer asks for longer**. The FCC has described simple ports as those that do not involve unbundled network elements, involve an account for a single line only, do not include complex switch translations ("e.g., Centrex, ISDN, AIN services, remote call forwarding, or multiple services on the loop"), and **do not include a reseller**. An old business landline often fails at least one of those tests.

Those intervals start late. The one-day clock applies to an accurate, complete request; an order rejected for a misspelled name restarts the process. Provider estimates of the whole journey are longer than the regulatory intervals: T-Mobile says a landline transfer **may take 3 to 10 days, depending on the accuracy of the information provided**, and Twilio says US ports **typically take 5 to 15 days once everything is submitted**, longer if the current provider rejects.

Canada has its own interval. Telecom Decision CRTC 2005-72 (20 December 2005) set simple intermodal porting at the LEC-to-LEC interval, **"which is currently two business days"**. The CRTC's consumer page says landline to mobile and the reverse **typically takes up to 2 business days**.

What your old line has	Likely category	What to expect
One line, one number, basic features	Simple	Shortest regulated interval; paperwork accuracy decides the rest
Several lines or numbers on one account	Non-simple (multi-line account)	Longer interval; partial moves need extra care
Centrex, ISDN/PRI, hunting across lines	Non-simple (complex translations)	Longer interval; plan with the new provider
Remote call forwarding number (no physical line)	Non-simple	Longer interval
Phone bundled with internet or TV on the same loop	May be treated as non-simple	Ask both providers before submitting

The order of operations

The FCC's sequence is short: review your contract for early termination fees and balances, **do not terminate service with your existing company**, contact the new company, and give it your 10-digit number and any information it needs. Expanded for a landline business account:

1. **Inventory what is on the old account** (see the checklist below): every number, every line, and every non-phone service.
2. **Read the contract** for minimum terms and early termination fees.
3. **Confirm portability** with the new provider for each number. In Canada, get the yes in writing.
4. **Get the paperwork** from the old provider: a recent bill, account number, exact account name and service address, any PIN.
5. **Set up the new service** and test it on a temporary number: greeting, menu, who rings, voicemail.
6. **Submit the port** through the new provider and sign the letter of authorisation.
7. **Choose the date**: a quiet weekday, not a Friday.
8. **Keep the old service fully active** until the new provider confirms the number has moved.
9. **Test** from several networks once the move is confirmed.
10. **Then cancel** what is left on the old account.

Why the order interval and the actual switch are different things is explained in **how long number porting takes**.

Gather the landline paperwork

Rejections usually come down to data that does not match the old provider's records. Twilio's US requirements are typical: a letter of authorisation, a **name and address that match the Customer Service Record (CSR)**, a **copy of a bill dated within the last 30 days**, the current provider's account number, and a PIN if required. Twilio says the most common reason for a rejected port is incorrect name or address, and suggests asking the current provider for the name and address on the CSR. For Canada, Twilio asks for a letter of authorisation **dated within the last 30 days that shows the actual Canadian service address**, because it is sent to the current provider and must match its records.

Paperwork checklist:

- ☐ Most recent full bill (all pages), not a payment receipt.
- ☐ Account number exactly as printed. Landline accounts sometimes carry a separate billing number; ask which one the port team needs.
- ☐ Account holder name exactly as on the account: the registered business name, a trade name, or a person, whichever the record shows.
- ☐ Service address (where the line is installed), which may differ from the billing address.
- ☐ Every number on the account, including any you are not moving.
- ☐ Any port-out PIN or account passcode.
- ☐ Name of the person authorised on the account, who will sign.

A simple request to the old provider:

"I'd like a copy of the customer service record for account [number]: the listed account name, service address, billing telephone number and every number and feature on the account. I'm not cancelling anything today."

Bundles and cancellation traps

Debt does not block the port, but it does not disappear. The FCC says your old company **cannot refuse to port your number, even if you owe money for an outstanding balance or termination fee**, while your contract may still contain early termination fees and balances you are obligated to pay. In practice, provider documentation still lists an **unpaid balance or a port-away fee** among the common reasons a carrier initially rejects a request, so clear what you can before submitting and keep the FCC guidance at hand if a balance is used to stall a US port. Verizon, for example, says you may be charged an **early termination fee if a line has an unfinished minimum term** when the number ports out.

Bundles complicate the request. In the FCC's 2009 order, AT&T reported that some cable VoIP providers claimed they were not subject to the simple-port interval when customers had **double-play or triple-play packages, because those involve "multiple services on the loop"**. Whatever the outcome for a given provider, a phone line that shares an account or a physical connection with internet or TV is more likely to be handled as a complex order.

The following are practical warnings rather than sourced rules. Ask the old provider about each before you submit:

- **Internet on the same account.** Will porting the phone number change the internet price, plan or contract? Some bundle discounts depend on keeping the phone line. Your new VoIP service needs that internet connection, so do not let it be cancelled by accident.
- **Alarm or monitoring panels.** Older alarm systems often dial out over the copper line. Talk to the alarm company before the line goes away.
- **Fax, card terminals, elevator or gate phones.** Anything plugged into a phone jack needs its own plan. A fax number can be ported like any other number, but the fax machine will not work on most voice-only VoIP services.
- **Directory listings.** Ask whether your listing is tied to the old service, and how it will be kept.

Multi-line and hunt-group accounts

A small office often has a main number that "hunts" across two or three lines, plus a fax line. That shape makes the port non-simple, both because the account has more than one line and because hunting is a switch feature. You have two reasonable approaches:

Approach	When it fits	Watch out for
Port all numbers together	You are leaving the old provider entirely	Bigger order, longer interval; one error can hold all numbers

Approach	When it fits	Watch out for
Port the main number first, the rest later	You need the main number moved soonest	Ask what the remaining lines will cost once the main one leaves; the account may be repriced

On the VoIP side you usually do not need extra lines to receive several calls at once; how many simultaneous calls a service accepts is a question to ask the new provider directly.

What you lose when the old line goes

- **Long-distance carrier.** The FCC notes your **wireline long-distance company will not move with you.**
- **Recorded voicemail and greetings.** These stay with the old service. Save what you need.
- **Behaviour in outages.** Ask how the new service behaves when your office loses power or internet, and plan a fallback (for example, a charged mobile) for emergencies.
- **911 behaviour.** The FCC warns that 911 location and callback services may be affected while a wireline number moves to a wireless service, and the CRTC warns of **possible disruptions, including to 9-1-1, while a number is transferred.** Ask the new provider how emergency calls work on its service and which address it holds.

Canada specifics in short

- Confirm the VoIP provider will accept your number before anything else; port-in is at its **discretion.**
- Moving to a different province or local calling area may mean a new number (**CRTC**). The underlying rule is the exchange: porting in is mandatory only when the new service location is within the number's home exchange (**CRTC 2016-345, para. 26**).
- The regulated simple intermodal interval is **two business days** from a complete request, not from your first phone call.
- Have the letter of authorisation show the actual Canadian service address.
- If you port from a mobile, Twilio notes you must **approve the port within 90 minutes of the losing provider's text.**

After the port: cancel at the right moment

1. Wait for the new provider's written confirmation that the number is active.
2. Test calls from a mobile, another landline and the old carrier's network.
3. Cancel the remaining services on the old account that you no longer need: unported lines, features, equipment rentals. T-Mobile notes **remaining lines may need to be cancelled to avoid unexpected charges.**
4. Return rented equipment if the contract requires it, and keep the final bill.
5. Update the alarm company, card-terminal provider and anyone else who relied on the old line.

FAQ

Can I cancel the landline and keep the number? Only by porting it. Cancel first and the number is gone; the CRTC lists that case as one where you **will definitely need a new number**.

Can the phone company refuse because I owe money? In the US, the FCC says **no**, though you still owe the balance. Paying it before submitting avoids arguments.

Can I port my landline if I am moving across town? Often, if you stay in the same geographic area (in Canada, the number's exchange). Across a province or a state, expect to need a new number. See our **business phone number and area code guide** for choosing one.

Do I keep my fax number? The number can be ported like any other. Whether faxes still arrive depends on the new service, so check before you move it.

Do I need a technician? Not for the port itself. The change happens in the carriers' systems; you may still want help with alarm panels or other equipment on the old line.

For the full rule set in both countries, see the **porting guide**. Auto Attendant handles landline ports in its app: an instant check, an online signature, and no charge until the number has moved.

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Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

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About Auto Attendant

Auto Attendant gives a small business one phone number and a recorded menu that sends each caller to the right person. The call rings the mobile that person already carries, using their normal dialler and their normal mobile plan. Pricing is a single flat monthly fee for the whole company rather than a charge for each user, and there is no app, desk phone or hardware to install.

One number, one menu, the phones you already own

A caller dials the business number, hears a short greeting and chooses an option. Each option can ring one mobile, ring several at once so whoever is free answers first, or try people one after another in a set order. There is no limit on how many people sit on the receiving end, because nobody is billed per seat. Setup is done by the owner in a few minutes: pick a number, write the greeting, and point each option at a mobile.

What it deliberately is not

An auto attendant routes a call; it does not answer one. Nobody at Auto Attendant speaks to callers, and no AI stands in for a receptionist. A business that wants its calls handled, messages taken and appointments booked wants an answering service, which is a different product at a different price. A business that needs call recording, queues, agent dashboards or CRM integration wants a contact centre platform. Auto Attendant is for the case where the call should simply reach the right pocket.

Keeping personal numbers off the internet

The business number is the only number a caller ever sees. Personal mobile numbers are never displayed and never given out, which is what lets an owner put a number on a website, an invoice, a van or a Google Business Profile without handing a personal line to everyone who finds it. An existing advertised number can be ported across and kept, and the old line keeps working while the port is in progress.

Work with Auto Attendant

Visit [Auto Attendant](#) to see [how it works](#), [how it compares](#) to a personal mobile, Google Voice and a full phone platform, and the current [pricing](#).

Telephone number portability, emergency calling and caller-ID rules differ by country and change over time. Articles published here describe general practice and cite primary regulator and carrier sources; they are not a guarantee of any timeline, and they are not legal or regulatory advice for a specific business.

Website: <https://autoattendant.io>

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