

Telephone Options

While you may obtain traditional telephone services from your local telephone company, landline service may be discontinued in the future.

Unless you have received a discontinuance of service notice, switching from landline telephone service is voluntary.

Digital Telephone Service. In addition to traditional wireline telephone service, digital telephone service, sometimes called “Voice over Internet Protocol” or “VoIP” is generally available from your traditional telephone company, a cable company, or an independent “VoIP” provider. Digital phone services requires an internet connection.

Wireless Telephone Service. Some people are substituting wireless or cell phone service for landline service. Because service quality varies by cell phone company and location, consumers should ask the company if they allow consumers at least 14 days to test their service before they are bound by a contract term. For other wireless customer protections, see http://files.ctia.org/pdf/The_Code.pdf



KWAME RAOUL ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

If you have questions about your telephone service or your rights under the law, please call Attorney General Office.

CONSUMER HOTLINES

CHICAGO

1-800-386-5438

SPRINGFIELD

1-800-243-0618

CARBONDALE

1-800-243-0607

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

Switching to Digital or Wireless Phone Service:

Understanding Your Options



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Your Landline Phone

If you use a landline phone from a traditional telephone company, you may be using a phone line based on older **TDM** connection technology. Over the past decade, phone carriers have been replacing TDM connections in favor of the newer **Internet Protocol (IP)** connection technology (VoIP), sometimes called “**digital**” telephone service. Digital service can greatly expand the functionality of your phone service, but you may be unable to use older devices or services and you may face higher costs. These services may not be available or reliable in all areas.



Here's what you need to know

Will I lose any services or functions by switching to digital service?

Unbundled landline services.

Illinois law requires traditional telephone companies to offer stand-alone telephone service. However, carriers offering digital telephone service may require you to buy phone service with other services like Internet access or cable TV, at additional cost. Digital telephone service requires an Internet connection.

Need for an electric connection.

Traditional telephone service obtains power from the phone line itself, enabling you to use your telephone if there is no electricity due to a power outage. Digital phones must be plugged into an electrical outlet and require a charged back-up battery to work during a power outage. Ask your service provider for details.

Change in 911 Access

In addition, 911 calls made using IP technology may not automatically route your call to the nearest emergency call center or display your address on the call center's caller ID. Check with your service provider to be sure that your 911 location is correctly selected.

Use of medical alert and security systems. Digital phone service may be incompatible with medical alert or home security systems that rely on an analog signal.

Ability to use a fax machine.

Traditional fax machines use analog technology and are only compatible with traditional landline service. Customers who wish to use fax machines with digital or IP service need to investigate whether their machine will accept a digital signal and may have to purchase newer or additional equipment.

Be aware of new terms of service, including contracts with early termination fees, when subscribing to digital or wireless telephone service.

Some carriers may require customers who subscribe to digital or wireless telephone service to enter into a one or two year contract with substantially different terms of service. Changed terms can include switching from a **per-call to a per-minute charge, higher monthly bills, and early termination fees.** **Avoid surprises by taking the time to understand the new terms of service.**

Customers who switch to digital service may be charged an installation fee of up to \$99.

A customer switching from a landline to digital telephone service may be charged an “installation” or “connection” fee. For example, **AT & T charges a \$99 installation fee to Illinois customers** who switch from TDM to U-Verse. Be sure to ask about connection fees.