

Mobile devices

10. If your device is lost or stolen

Contact your service provider immediately to suspend your service - this will stop unauthorised calls being made, but if you are on a plan, you will still need to pay the monthly contract fee. Some network providers offer insurance for your mobile device, but make sure you read the conditions and any exclusions before buying it.



11. Your phone or tablet's warranty

Read what is covered by the manufacturer in the warranty paperwork to ensure there is no confusion later. Remember that regardless of the warranty, you automatically get a consumer guarantee with every phone or mobile device you buy, which means that you are entitled to ask for a refund if the phone is not of acceptable quality or fails soon after you buy it. Make sure you keep your receipts and network service connection agreement as proof of purchase.



12. What if things go wrong?

Contact the retailer or network provider to try and sort out the problem. If you are unsuccessful, contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) for problems with a network service provider or Fair Trading for problems with a retailer concerning the handset. The TIO will also examine complaints about faulty handsets where the handset was bought as part of a contract or bundled deal.



Useful contacts

Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO)

Tel: 1800 062 058 (free call)
www.tio.com.au

Financial Rights Legal Centre

Tel: 1800 007 007
www.financialrights.org.au

SCAMwatch

www.scamwatch.gov.au

Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA)

Tel: 02 6232 4488
www.amta.org.au

Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network

www.acorn.gov.au



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NSW Fair Trading – What we do

- Shopping and consumer guarantees
- Retirement villages
- Renting, buying, selling a home
- Co-operatives, associations and charitable fundraising
- Home building and renovating
- Product safety
- Strata and community living
- Resolving disputes

www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

Enquiries 13 32 20

Language assistance 13 14 50 (ask for an interpreter in your language)

TTY 1300 723 404 for hearing impaired

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NSW Fair Trading
Supporting local communities

Before buying a mobile phone or tablet, or signing up to a new mobile contract, be aware of the following:

1. Shop around and check mobile coverage

Look at all different types of plans (pre-paid, capped and monthly) as call costs and deals vary dramatically. Do your sums and look at what calls, texts and data downloads you would normally make in a month to work out the best deal for you. Penalties can apply if you change plans before the contract expires and some contracts last up to 3 years. Voicemail, call forwarding, premium SMS, internet browsing, new mobile apps, 'in app' purchases and international 'roaming' are often additional charges to your call plan or value 'cap'. Also look at the network coverage maps on the service provider's website, or in-store, to find out the quality of reception in the areas you are likely to use the device.



2. Believe the contract, not the salesperson

Do not take the salesperson's word for it. Always read mobile device contracts thoroughly and do not sign anything unless you fully understand your obligations in the contract and what you are getting for your money. Think carefully before 'going guarantor' on a phone contract for someone under 18 as you will be responsible for paying the bills if they cannot pay.



3. Check and pay your bills

Before signing your mobile device contract, find out what your monthly (and any additional device purchase) charges will be so you do not get an unexpectedly high bill. If you do not pay your bill on time you might be listed with a credit reporting agency for a default. If you want to dispute any call or data charges, raise this with your service provider. To get a free copy of your credit report call Equifax (formerly known as Veda) on 13 83 32 or visit www.mycreditfile.com.au or call Dunn and Bradstreet on 1300 734 806 or visit www.checkyourcredit.com.au



4. Be aware of 'pro-rata charging' practices

When signing up to a new service, discuss with your provider how their billing cycle and 'pro-rata' charging practices may affect you. Also, check your original contract before switching between providers. 'Included value' in some service plans may not correspond with the provider's billing cycle, and you can not always control exactly how long a connection to a provider, or transfer between providers may take. Be alert when signing up or transferring to a new provider part-way through a billing cycle. You may incur extra costs if you exceed your pro-rata usage entitlements.



5. Mobile phone scams

If you receive an SMS from an unknown number urging you to enter a competition or to answer a quiz to win a prize, do not respond! By responding you may unintentionally sign up to a premium service that you do not want, with a call rate of around \$6 per minute or more. It may be hard to unsubscribe without further costs, and in some circumstances you may even need to change your phone number to terminate the scam. For more information on scams, visit www.scamwatch.gov.au



6. Downloading data to smart-phones and tablets

Monitoring your data allowance can help avoid big bills when accessing the internet and email, via your mobile device. Some devices monitor your data usage automatically in 'Settings', but you may need to reset these at the start of each billing period. Alternatively, call or SMS your service provider, or log into your online account to check on your data usage. Some of these services may cost extra, so check with your service provider first.



7. Global roaming charges

Before travelling overseas with a mobile phone or tablet, check with your service provider about international roaming and overseas telephone services. You can arrange for automatic call diversion to voicemail or turn off global roaming. Understanding roaming costs and overseas call charges, as well as taking precautions with your phone or tablet, may prevent you from returning home to a bill that costs more than your trip!



8. Application software packages (apps) and in-app purchases

Mobile 'apps' can make your new mobile device more useful. However, there may be data costs in downloading, using, or updating those apps. Always check terms and conditions when downloading or updating apps. Control data use by closing apps, switching off 'push notifications' or by turning off network access altogether when not needed. Download new apps or updates through Wi-Fi connections, monitor your data use and find out about free or unmetered apps that may be part of your plan.



9. Beware of ringtone offers

Before downloading a ringtone check the seller's terms and conditions to ensure that you are not agreeing to pay for other ringtones that you may not want. Find out if the tone you want is offered as a one-off download or part of a subscription service, how much each download will cost and what you'll have to do to cancel it. For information on mobile premium services visit www.19sms.com.au

