



# Cellular Service Plan Feature Comparison Chart

To use this chart, take it with you to the store and fill in the blanks for each plan you are interested in. Also, you may want to keep it near your desk as you research each service plan.

Feature Description	Provider / Service Plan	_____	_____	_____
	Price	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
<p><b>Service Plan Basics:</b>  <b>Annual Contracts</b> lock you in to a fixed rate; other offers from competing firms may be better during the term of the contract. Check how many <b>minutes</b> are offered and when you can use them. Note if any "free minutes" are in a schedule you can easily remember.</p> <p><b>Month-to-month</b> plans (no annual contract) allow you to change the number of minutes and other provisions. Look for plans that let you roll over unused minutes to the next month and have no extra charges for calls made outside the home network area you live in (<b>roaming charges</b>).</p> <p>Your local calling area determines whether you'll pay <b>long distance</b> charges.</p>	<b>Annual contract</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Monthly plan</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Minutes included</b>	_____	_____	_____
	<b>Cost per minute beyond plan allowance</b>	Per minute: _____	Per minute: _____	Per minute: _____
	<b>Free long distance</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Free roaming</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Roll over minutes</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Free incoming calls (first minute)</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
<p><b>Coverage:</b> Ask to see a coverage map of the plan provider. Look for roads you typically travel. Ask about what towers are planned if you see gaps in coverage. Ask if the phone can be software-updated locally as more towers are built, or if the phone's internal software gets any free factory updates.</p>	<b>Local coverage</b>	Good ___ Poor ___	Good ___ Poor ___	Good ___ Poor ___
	<b>National coverage</b>	Good ___ Poor ___	Good ___ Poor ___	Good ___ Poor ___
	<b>Software updates</b>	None ___ Local ___ Factory ___	None ___ Local ___ Factory ___	None ___ Local ___ Factory ___
<p><b>Additional fees:</b> Make sure you know exactly what is or isn't considered long distance. Are you charged both to turn on cell phone service (<b>activation fee</b>) and to cancel service before your contract runs out (<b>termination fee</b>)? Termination fees apply even if you move out of a carrier's service area.</p>	<b>Long distance charge</b>	Per minute: _____	Per minute: _____	Per minute: _____
	<b>Roaming charge</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
	<b>Activation fee</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
	<b>Termination fee</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
<p><b>Mode:</b> In the United States, <b>analog</b> phones offer the greatest amount of coverage since the AMPS network covers about 95 percent of the country. However, <b>digital</b> phones provide many more features, including e-mail/text messaging, wireless Internet and Caller ID.</p> <p>The <b>900-MHz</b> band is mainly used in Europe and Asia. Look for dual mode/dual band phones if you travel a lot.</p>	<b>Type</b>	Analog ___ Digital ___ GSM ___ PCS ___	Analog ___ Digital ___ GSM ___ PCS ___	Analog ___ Digital ___ GSM ___ PCS ___
	<b>Band</b>	800 MHz ___ 900 MHz ___ 1900 MHz ___	800 MHz ___ 900 MHz ___ 1900 MHz ___	800 MHz ___ 900 MHz ___ 1900 MHz ___
<p><b>Service Plan Extras:</b> <b>Voice mail</b> is great for those who travel and/or are unable to remotely play messages from the usual home answering machine. Ask if playing back voice mail uses up your regular minutes. <b>Call forwarding</b> is useful if you are often away from your phone or out of your plan's service area. You can avoid landline call termination charges by forwarding your calls to a land-based phone. <b>Caller ID</b> is helpful for screening calls that you pay for (although some numbers can still be blocked by the caller). If you have a plan in which the first incoming minute is free, this feature may be less necessary. Check to see if the phone can connect to the <b>Internet</b>, or if it serves as a <b>modem</b> for your computer.</p>	<b>Voice Mail</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Call Forwarding</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Caller ID</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Web Capable Phone</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Plan provides Web access</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Email/text messaging</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Web minutes included</b>	_____	_____	_____
<p><b>Useful accessories:</b> Look for quickly recharging, long-lasting <b>batteries</b>. While most batteries are removable, some smaller phones only have a built-in battery. A <b>hands-free</b> kit increases driver safety, and hands-free operation is great even when you're not in a vehicle. An included <b>DC adaptor</b> is handy if you will be using the phone in a car.</p>	<b>Battery charger</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Hands-free kit</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___
	<b>Car power adaptor</b>	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___	Yes ___ No ___