

Tips for Avoiding Bill Shock on your Mobile Phone

FCC Consumer Facts

Without automatic usage alerts, it can be hard to know when you're running up a surprisingly high wireless bill. The FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau recommends these strategies to avoid bill shock today.

1. Understand your calling pattern for making voice calls, and ask your carrier for a plan that would be best for your kind of use. Questions to ask yourself include:

- Will you use the phone frequently or for emergencies only?
- Do you call at all times or mainly days, evenings or weekends?
- Are most of your calls local? Regional? Nationwide? Worldwide?
- Are most of your calls to a small number of friends and family, or do you call many different people?

2. If you are an infrequent phone user, consider a pre-paid plan. Because you "pre-pay" for all your minutes, these plans make it impossible to go over your set limit.

3. Understand what your roaming charges are and where you will incur them:

- Make sure that the phone's screen will tell you when you are roaming.
- Under many plans, you may not get an extra charge even when your phone says you are roaming. Find out how your plan works.

4. Understand your options for data and text plans:

- If you have used data and text plans before – enough to know your usage pattern – talk to your carrier about the plan that will be best for you.
- If you're new to data and text, choose a plan that seems right and monitor your usage during the first few weeks to see if you are approaching your limit.
- Consider an unlimited plan if your data or text usage is high enough.

5. If you expect to be taking your phone outside the U.S. and potentially using it for voice or data (including email), make certain to find out beforehand what charges may apply:

- It is very common for significant extra charges to apply.
- In fact, extra charges may apply even if your phone is just automatically checking to see whether you have any new email.

6. Ask how your carrier can help you avoid bill shock – with phone or text alerts, by letting you monitor your account online, or by giving you other information.

(More)



7. If you have tried to resolve the issue with your carrier and can not reach an acceptable resolution, you may file a complaint with the FCC. You can call our Consumer Center, toll-free, at 1-888-CALL FCC (1-888-225-5322), or file a complaint on the Internet at www.fcc.gov/complaints.

###

For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print, or audio) please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an email to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/.

This document is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceedings or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

