

Switch Carriers, Keep Your Number

THE QUICK VERSION

- 1 Your account number with the old carrier. This is not your phone number — it is a separate account number, usually printed on your bill or shown in the carrier's app.
- 2 A number transfer PIN, sometimes called a port-out PIN. This is a short one-time code you must request from your current carrier specifically for moving your number. It is not the same as your everyday account password.
- 3 Your regular account PIN or passcode, the one you may already use to call customer service. Some carriers ask for this too, alongside the transfer PIN.

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Switching Carriers Without Losing Your Number

The one rule that protects your number, plus what to do when a port stalls.

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1693 · SWITCHING** —————

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1. The One Rule That Protects Your Number

Learn this and the rest is routine.

If you remember only one thing from this entire guide, make it this: never cancel your old phone service before your number has moved. It feels backwards — you would think you cancel the old company and then sign up with the new one. But that order can lose your number permanently, and it is the single most common way a switch goes wrong.

Here is why. When you move your number to a new carrier, the new carrier reaches over and pulls the number out of the old account. That pull is what carries your number across, and it is also what closes the old line for you, automatically, at the right moment. But the number can only be pulled while the old account is still open and active. If you have already cancelled the old service, there is nothing left to pull from — the number is released back into the pool and, in practice, gone.

So the safe order is always the same: gather what you need, sign up with the new carrier and let them pull your number, and then simply leave the old account alone. It will close itself when the move finishes. You do not cancel anything. The whole thing is called porting your number, and once you hold on to this one rule, every other step in this guide is just careful housekeeping.

WATCH OUT

If a well-meaning person tells you to cancel the old plan first to avoid paying twice, politely ignore it. You will not be double-billed for long, and the old line closing itself is exactly what protects your number.

2. How Porting Actually Works

In plain English, start to finish.

Porting is the industry word for moving your phone number from one carrier to another. It exists because of federal rules that say your number belongs to you, not to the phone company. That is why you can keep the same number through a lifetime of switches, and why your doctor, your bank, your kids, and your pharmacy never have to be told anything changed.

The actual mechanics are simple once you picture them. You sign up with the new carrier and tell them the number you want to bring and a couple of details that prove the account

is really yours. The new carrier then sends a request to the old carrier that amounts to: this customer wants their number; please release it. The old carrier checks the details match, says yes, and the number hops over to the new carrier. The old line goes dark at that moment, and the new line lights up with your familiar number.

Most of the time this happens quickly — often within a few hours, sometimes faster. Occasionally it takes most of a day, and rarely it stalls because a detail did not match. The later chapters cover exactly what to do in each case. But the heart of it is that calm handoff: the new carrier pulls, the old carrier releases, your number moves, and you did not have to cancel a thing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because of fraud-protection rules, the carriers will confirm that you really want to move your number before finishing. So do not be alarmed by a confirmation text or step — it is there to protect you, not to stop you.

3. What You Need From the Old Carrier First

Three things, gathered before you begin.

The most common reason a switch turns stressful is starting it before you have what you need from the old carrier in hand. Once you begin the port, you do not want to be hunting for a code while the clock ticks. So gather these first, calmly, before you sign up with anyone new.

- Your account number with the old carrier. This is not your phone number — it is a separate account number, usually printed on your bill or shown in the carrier's app.
- A number transfer PIN, sometimes called a port-out PIN. This is a short one-time code you must request from your current carrier specifically for moving your number. It is not the same as your everyday account password.
- Your regular account PIN or passcode, the one you may already use to call customer service. Some carriers ask for this too, alongside the transfer PIN.

Write all three down on paper before you start. The transfer PIN in particular tends to expire after a few days, so get it close to when you actually plan to switch, not weeks ahead. If it expires, no harm done — you just request a fresh one. The next two chapters show exactly where to find the account number and how to get the transfer PIN from each of the big carriers.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep the old phone handy and charged while you gather these, because the quickest way to get a transfer PIN is often right on that phone through its app or a special dial code.

4. Getting Your Account Number

Where it hides on each carrier.

Your account number is the identifier the old carrier uses for your account. The new carrier needs it to request your number. It is almost always easy to find once you know where to look.

- On your bill. Look near the top of a paper or emailed bill — the account number is usually printed there, often labeled plainly as account number. This is the simplest source if you keep your bills.
- In the carrier's app. On AT&T, it lives in the profile or sign-in information area. On T-Mobile, it is a nine-digit number shown near the top of your account. On Verizon, it is in your account profile or on the bill.
- By calling the old carrier. If you cannot find it, call their customer service and ask for your account number for a transfer. They are required to give it to you.

A word of reassurance: asking for your account number, or even telling them it is for a transfer, does not start anything or cancel anything. You are just collecting information. Nothing moves until the new carrier sends the actual request later. So gather freely — there is no harm in having the number in hand and deciding not to switch after all.

WATCH OUT

Prepaid accounts sometimes use a different identifier, and some ask for the passcode you set when you activated the phone. If your account is prepaid, confirm exactly what the new carrier will need before you begin.

5. Getting the Transfer PIN

The one-time code that unlocks the move.

The number transfer PIN is a short one-time code, separate from your normal password, that tells the old carrier it is really you authorizing the move. Carriers added it specifically to stop crooks from stealing numbers, which is a good thing — but it means you have to go get it on purpose. Here is how, by carrier.

- AT&T: the quickest way is to dial a special code from your AT&T phone — star, P-O-R-T (that is star 7678) — and they text your transfer PIN to you. You can also find it in the myAT&T app under the profile area, in the number-transfer section.
- T-Mobile: only the primary account holder can create it, in the T-Mobile app under the account settings, in the area for permissions and controls, where there is a transfer-PIN option. If you have an extra number-lock protection turned on, you may need to turn it off first.
- Verizon: you can generate a number transfer PIN in the Verizon app or account site, in the account or security area, or by calling. It is good for a limited window — about a week — so get it near your switch date.

Whatever carrier you are leaving, the PIN usually expires after a few days to a week. That is normal and it is a safety feature. If it lapses before you switch, just request a new one — it takes a minute. Get it close to when you actually plan to move, keep it with your account number on the same slip of paper, and you are ready.

TIP

If the dial code or app route gives you any trouble, calling the carrier and asking plainly for a number transfer PIN always works. Say it is for porting your number out, and they know exactly what you mean.

6. Number Lock and Port-Out Protection

A safety switch you may need to flip off first.

In recent years the carriers added an extra layer of protection with names like number lock, port-out protection, or SIM protection. When it is on, it blocks anyone — including you — from moving your number until you deliberately turn it off. It exists to stop a thief from hijacking your number, and it is a genuinely good thing to have switched on in everyday life.

But when you want to switch carriers on purpose, that same lock will quietly block your own port and leave you wondering why the move will not go through. So part of your preparation, if you have this protection enabled, is turning it off right before you switch. It usually lives in the same security or account-protection area of the carrier's app where you found the transfer PIN.

The sensible rhythm is: turn off the number lock, do the switch, and if you want that protection on your new carrier, turn it back on there once you are settled. You are not

leaving yourself exposed for long — just for the window of the move. And if you are not sure whether you have this protection on, it is worth checking before you start, because a stalled port with no obvious reason is very often a forgotten number lock.

GOOD TO KNOW

After your number is safely on the new carrier, I recommend turning this protection back on there. It is one of the best defenses against a growing scam where crooks try to steal numbers to break into bank and email accounts.

7. Picking the Day and the Timing

A little planning avoids a lot of stress.

When you switch matters more than people expect. The port itself usually finishes quickly, but if it does stall, you want help readily available and you do not want to be mid-emergency without a working phone. A few minutes of planning the timing takes the pressure off the whole thing.

- Pick a quiet weekday morning. Tuesday or Wednesday is ideal. If anything hangs, both carriers have support available and the whole day to sort it, rather than you waiting out a weekend.
- Avoid Friday afternoons, weekends, and holidays. If a port stalls going into a weekend, you may sit without full service until Monday.
- Do not switch the day before you truly need the phone — not the morning of a medical appointment, a flight, or a day you are expecting an important call.
- Keep both phones, or at least your old phone, charged and nearby during the switch, in case you need the old line briefly or need to read a code.

It also helps to do the switch when you have an unhurried hour to yourself. Most of that hour you will spend simply waiting while the number moves, but being relaxed and unrushed means that if a confirmation text or a small hiccup shows up, you handle it calmly rather than panicking and doing something hasty like cancelling the old line — which, as you now know, is the one thing never to do.

TIP

If you rely on your phone for medical alerts or caregiving, tell a family member you are switching that morning, so someone knows to reach you another way during the short window if needed.

8. Starting the Port With the New Carrier

The moment the move actually begins.

With your account number, transfer PIN, and account passcode written down, and any number lock turned off, you are ready to start the move with the new carrier. This is the step where the switch actually begins, and it is shorter than the preparation was.

- 1 Sign up with the new carrier, through their app, website, or in a store. Choose your plan.
- 2 When they ask whether you are bringing a number, say yes — this is called transferring or porting a number.
- 3 Enter the number you are moving, your old carrier's name, your account number, and the transfer PIN. This is the moment the port request goes out.
- 4 Choose how you will activate: an eSIM (a digital SIM, activated by scanning a code) or a physical SIM card mailed to you. The next chapter covers which your phone uses.
- 5 Confirm and submit. From here, the carriers handle the handoff between themselves. Double-check the number, account number, and PIN before you submit — a single wrong digit is the most common cause of a stalled port. Once submitted, your job is mostly to wait. Your old service typically keeps working through most of the wait, so you are not cut off while the move happens. When the port completes, the old line goes quiet and the new one takes over your number.

WATCH OUT

Type carefully. Most ports that hang do so because the account number or transfer PIN had a typo. If you are entering it by hand, read it back twice before submitting.

9. What You Will See On Screen

So the normal steps do not alarm you.

A port involves a few on-screen moments that can look worrying if you do not expect them. Here is what is normal, so none of it startles you.

- A status like activating, pending, or port in progress in the new carrier's app. This is good — it means the request is working its way through. It is not stuck just because it is not instant.
- A stretch of no service or SOS only on the phone for a little while during the handoff. This is the brief gap while your number moves. Do not panic and do not keep restarting the phone — just wait.

- A confirmation text or step asking you to confirm you want to move your number. This is the fraud-protection check. Confirm that yes, you want to proceed. Do not reply no or stop unless you actually want to cancel the move.
- A final text from your OLD carrier noting that a transfer request is in progress. Let it sit. The port continues on its own.
- The new line suddenly showing full service with your familiar number. That is the finish line.

The one that trips people up most is the stretch of no service in the middle. It feels like something broke, and the temptation is to start restarting the phone over and over or, worse, to call the old carrier and cancel in frustration. Resist both. That gap is the number changing hands, and it clears itself. Give it time.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are doing an eSIM switch, you may briefly see two lines on your phone — your old one and the new one — during the overlap. That is fine; it is the handoff in progress.

10. eSIM Versus Physical SIM During the Switch

Which your phone uses, and why it changes the timing.

Phones connect to a carrier through a SIM — either a small physical card in a tray, or a digital eSIM built into the phone with nothing to insert. Which one your phone uses changes how fast your switch can happen, so it is worth knowing before you start.

An eSIM activates almost instantly. You sign up, the carrier sends a code to scan, your phone downloads the new line, and you can be switching over within minutes of signing up — no waiting for mail. The newest iPhones sold in the United States are eSIM only, with no card tray at all, so for many people eSIM is the only option anyway. A physical SIM, by contrast, is a card that arrives in the mail in a few days; you pop out the old one and pop in the new one when it comes.

For a switch, eSIM is usually the smoother path when your phone supports it, because there is no mail delay and because the new line can sit alongside your old one during the handoff. A physical SIM is perfectly fine too — it just means a few days of waiting for the card, and planning your switch day for after it arrives. Either way, the number port works the same; the SIM is only how your phone connects to the new carrier.

TIP

If you are not sure which your phone uses, the model matters: the latest iPhones are eSIM only, most phones from the last several years do both, and older phones use a physical card. When in doubt, text me the model and I will tell you.

11. Dual-SIM During the Transition

Keeping the old line alive while the new one settles.

Many modern phones can hold two lines at once — one physical SIM and one eSIM, or two eSIMs. This is called dual-SIM, and it is a handy safety net during a carrier switch, because it lets you keep your old line working while you test the new one, before you move your number for good.

Here is how people use it to make a switch gentle. You add the new carrier as an eSIM alongside your existing line. For a day or two you can test the new network — make calls, load the internet, walk your house — while your old number keeps ringing on the original line. Only once you are satisfied the new service works do you move your actual number over. If the new network disappoints, you remove it and you never disturbed your number at all.

Dual-SIM is also what is happening quietly during an eSIM port: for a little while the phone carries both lines as the handoff completes. You do not have to understand the mechanics — just know that seeing two lines briefly is normal, not a problem. After the port finishes and you are happy, you can remove the old line to tidy things up, though there is no rush.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every phone does dual-SIM, and the oldest ones do not. But if yours does, it turns a switch from a leap into a gentle step-across. It is the same idea behind the free trial SIMs some carriers offer.

12. The Waiting Window

What is normal, and when to start paying attention.

Once you have submitted the port, you wait. Knowing what a normal wait looks like keeps you from worrying — or from doing something rash — while the carriers do their handoff behind the scenes.

- First few hours: completely normal and expected. Most ports finish in this window. If your old line still works and the new one is pending, everything is fine. Go do something else.
- Up to most of a day: still within normal, especially for some carriers or busier times. A port is not stuck just because it is taking hours.
- Past a full day: now it is worth checking on. This usually means a detail did not match, or the old carrier has not released the number yet. The next chapters tell you exactly what to do.
- Throughout: resist restarting the phone over and over. One restart after the new line shows active is fine; constant restarts just add confusion.

The hardest part of the waiting window is the stretch where the new line says pending and the phone may show no service. It feels broken. It is not — it is the number in transit. The best thing you can do is set the phone down, keep it charged, and check back in a couple of hours rather than hovering over it. Patience here is genuinely the right tool.

TIP

Keep your old phone on and charged during the wait. You may need it to receive a confirmation text or to read your account details if support asks.

13. After the Port Completes

The first checks once your number has moved.

When the new line shows full service with your own number, the move is done — the old line has closed itself. Before you call it finished, run a few quick checks to make sure everything that relies on your number came across cleanly. This takes five minutes and catches the small things early.

- 1 Make a call out to a friend or family member. Confirm they hear you and you hear them clearly.
- 2 Have them call you back. Confirm your phone rings and you can answer.
- 3 Send a text and have one sent to you, in both directions.
- 4 Turn off Wi-Fi for a moment and open a web page or your email to confirm cellular data works.
- 5 Let a call go to voicemail and check that you can retrieve it.

Then check the quieter things over the next day. Log in to your bank or email and confirm the security code they text you still arrives — it almost always does, since it is tied to your number and your number came with you. If you turned a number lock off before the switch, consider turning it back on with the new carrier now. And if you used Wi-Fi calling at home,

confirm it is on and your home address is registered for 911 on the new service.

GOOD TO KNOW

An old carrier will often send one final partial bill for the days you used before the port. That is normal — pay it, and it does not mean anything went wrong. It is just the last few days squared up.

14. iMessage and FaceTime After a Port

The iPhone quirk worth knowing.

If you have an iPhone, there is one small quirk that can show up after a switch, and it has an easy fix, so it is worth knowing before it worries you. Apple's blue-bubble messaging (iMessage) and video calling (FaceTime) are tied to your phone number. After a port, they occasionally need a nudge to catch up with your number on the new carrier.

The symptoms, if they happen: texts to other iPhone users arrive as green bubbles instead of blue, or FaceTime will not connect, or messages seem to go to the wrong place for a day. Most of the time everything just works and you will never see this. But if you do, the fix is simple and it is the kind of thing I can talk you through in two minutes on the phone.

The usual cure is to turn iMessage and FaceTime off and back on in the phone's settings, which makes them re-check your number on the new carrier. Occasionally it takes a few hours to settle after that toggle. If it is still stubborn, signing out of your Apple account and back in resolves nearly all the rest. None of this affects your number or your regular calls and texts — it is only Apple's own messaging catching up to the move.

TIP

If you are switching an iPhone, give it a day before you worry about blue bubbles. They often fix themselves overnight as everything syncs to the new carrier.

15. When a Port Stalls — The Recovery Checklist

Calm steps for when it takes too long.

Now and then a port drags past a full day. It is not common and it is almost always fixable. The key is to work the problem calmly and, above all, to not cancel the old line in frustration — which would turn a delay into a real loss. Here is the checklist I use.

- 1 Check the new carrier's app for the port status. If it says active, restart your phone once — the line may just need a kick.
- 2 If it still says pending after a full day, contact the NEW carrier first — call or chat. Say your port started on such-and-such date and has not completed, and ask them to check the status.
- 3 They will usually find one of three things: a wrong account number, a wrong transfer PIN, or the old carrier has not released the number yet.
- 4 If a detail was wrong, get the correct value from your old carrier's app or bill and resubmit it to the new carrier.
- 5 If the old carrier is dragging its feet, ask the new carrier to call them with you on the line. Stay on the call while they sort it out together.

If all of that still does not move it, call the OLD carrier directly and use plain words: I have a stuck transfer to such-and-such carrier and I need you to release my number. The big carriers have a team for exactly this. Through all of it, the old line stays open until the port completes — that is what keeps your number safe while you untangle the holdup.

WATCH OUT

Do not cancel the old plan to try to force a stuck port through. It does the opposite — the number cannot be pulled from a closed account. Leave the old line alone until the new carrier shows the port complete.

16. When a Port Fails Outright

The rare case, and how to recover.

Very occasionally a port does not just stall, it comes back rejected. The good news is that a rejected port does not lose your number — your number simply stays where it was, on the old carrier, which is still active because you never cancelled it. So a failed port is a do-over, not a disaster.

The most common reasons for an outright rejection are a mismatch in the details: the account number, the transfer PIN, or even the name or address on the old account not matching what the new carrier submitted. A forgotten number lock is another frequent cause. All of these are correctable — you fix the detail and submit the port again.

- 1 Ask the new carrier exactly why it was rejected. They can usually see the reason the old carrier gave.

- 2 Go to the old carrier and confirm the exact account number, name, and address on file, and request a fresh transfer PIN.
- 3 Make sure any number lock or port-out protection is turned off on the old account.
- 4 Resubmit the port with the corrected details. It typically goes through cleanly the second time.

Because your number never left the old carrier during a failed port, there is no rush and no panic. Your phone keeps working on the old service the whole time. Take a breath, correct the mismatch, and try again. If the same rejection keeps coming back and you cannot see why, that is a good moment to call me — a fresh set of eyes usually spots the one digit or the one lock that is causing it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The small detail that most often causes a rejection is the name on the account not matching exactly — for instance, a port submitted under a nickname when the account is under a full legal name. Match it exactly.

17. Closing the Old Account Cleanly

The last loose ends after a successful move.

Once your number is happily on the new carrier, the old line closed itself when the port completed — you did not have to cancel it, and you should not have. But there are a couple of loose ends worth tidying so the old account does not leave surprises behind.

- Confirm the old line is closed. Log in to the old carrier's app or site; the line should show as cancelled or ported out. You do not act on it — you just confirm it happened.
- Expect one final bill. Old carriers usually send a last partial bill for the days you used before the port. Pay it. It is normal and does not mean anything is wrong.
- Watch for auto-pay. If the old account had automatic payments, make sure they stop once the final bill is settled, so you are not charged after the line is closed.
- Ask about any device balance. If you still owed money on a phone through the old carrier, that balance usually becomes due. Know what you owe so it does not surprise you.
- Return any leased equipment. If you rented a device or hotspot, return it to avoid a charge.

That is the whole of it. You kept your number, your phone, and your contacts; the old account closed itself; and the only paperwork is a final bill and making sure automatic payments stop. A clean switch leaves nothing lingering, which is exactly how it should feel.

TIP

Keep your old SIM card, if you had a physical one, in a labeled envelope for a week or two. In the rare case a security code lags, you can pop it back in briefly to grab the code. After a couple of weeks everything has caught up and you can toss it.

18. Traps People Fall Into

The porting mistakes I untangle most.

The same handful of mistakes account for nearly every porting headache I am called about. All of them are avoidable once you know them.

- Cancelling the old line first. The big one. It loses the number. Never cancel — let the old line close itself.
- Starting without the account number and transfer PIN. Then scrambling mid-switch. Gather them calmly first.
- A typo in the account number or PIN. The leading cause of stalls. Read it back twice before submitting.
- Forgetting a number lock is on. It silently blocks your own port. Turn it off before you start.
- Switching Friday afternoon or before something important. If it hangs, you wait out the weekend. Pick a quiet weekday morning.
- Panicking during the no-service gap and doing something rash. That gap is normal. Wait it out.

WATCH OUT

If you take only two things from this guide: never cancel the old line first, and gather your account number and transfer PIN before you begin. Those two alone prevent almost every porting disaster.

19. Questions I Hear A Lot

Short, honest answers.

Q: Will I be without a phone during the switch?

A: Usually only for a short gap while the number moves, often just minutes to a couple of hours. Your old line typically keeps working through most of the wait, so you are rarely cut off for long.

Q: Can I keep my number if I am moving to a cheaper budget brand?

A: Yes. The process is identical whether you are moving between big carriers or to a budget brand. Your number is yours either way, as long as the old line stays open until the port finishes.

Q: Do my contacts and photos move with my number?

A: Porting moves only the number. Contacts, photos, and apps live on your phone or in your account, so if you keep the same phone, they stay put. If you also get a new phone, those are transferred separately.

Q: Is it safe to give the new carrier my old account number and PIN?

A: Yes — that is exactly what they are for, and it is how the move is authorized. The transfer PIN is one-time and expires, so there is no lasting risk in handing it over to complete the port.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any step makes you nervous, there is no shame in having someone do it with you. A port is routine, but it only feels routine after you have done one.

PREPAID

20. Porting a Number From a Prepaid Account

The same move, with a couple of prepaid twists.

A great many of the budget brands I recommend are prepaid — you pay ahead each month rather than getting a bill after. Keeping your number when you leave a prepaid account works exactly like any other port, with the same golden rule: never cancel or let the account lapse before your number has moved. But prepaid has a few twists worth knowing so the move goes smoothly.

The first twist is the account identifier. On a regular monthly account you have a clear account number. On prepaid, the new carrier may ask instead for the phone number itself plus a PIN or passcode you set when you activated the service. If you never set one, or cannot remember it, you may need to call the prepaid company to get or reset it before you can port. Sort that out first, calmly, before you start the switch.

The second twist is timing against your refill date. Prepaid service is only active while it is paid up. If your prepaid month runs out and the account shuts off before you port, your number can be lost — there is nothing active to pull it from. So do your switch while the prepaid account is still paid and alive, comfortably before the date it would expire. Do not let it run down to the last day, and never deliberately let it lapse thinking that frees the number. It does the opposite.

- 1 Make sure the prepaid account is paid and active, with days to spare before it expires.
- 2 Get your account PIN or passcode — set or reset it with the prepaid company if you are unsure.
- 3 Have your phone number and that PIN ready, and start the port with the new carrier while the old service is still live.
- 4 Let the old prepaid line close itself when the number moves. Do not cancel it.

WATCH OUT

Letting a prepaid account expire is the prepaid version of cancelling too early. An expired account is a closed account, and a closed account cannot hand over your number. Always port while the service is still paid and working.

TIP

If your prepaid PIN or passcode is a mystery, call the prepaid company a few days ahead and get it squared away. That one detail is the most common prepaid porting snag.

SHARED ACCOUNT

21. When the Account Is in a Spouse's Name

Who is allowed to move the number, and how.

A lot of couples have both phones on one account, under one person's name — very often a spouse who set it all up years ago. That is fine until you go to move a number, because carriers only take porting instructions from the person whose name is on the account, or someone that person has formally authorized. It is a fraud protection, and a sensible one, but it can trip up a switch if you do not plan for it.

Here is the thing to understand: the number may feel like yours — it rings on your phone, it is the number your friends call — but if the account is in your spouse's name, the carrier considers your spouse the account holder. The account number, the transfer PIN, and the authorization to port all have to come from them, or from you with their clear say-so. This matters most in hard moments, like after a death or during a separation, when getting that

authorization can be delicate.

In the ordinary case, where you are simply a married couple switching together, the fix is easy: the spouse whose name is on the account gathers the account number and transfer PIN and either does the port or sits with you while you do it. For the harder cases, carriers have processes — adding an authorized user, or transferring account ownership — that are worth sorting out before you try to port, not during.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are widowed and need to take over or move a number on your late spouse's account, the carrier will have a specific process, usually needing a death certificate. It is a known situation to them. Call and ask for the account-ownership or survivor process before attempting a port.

TIP

If both of you are switching, have the account holder present with the account number and PIN in hand. One missing authorization is a common reason a couple's port stalls out.

KEEP IT SAFE

22. Parking a Number You Are Not Ready to Lose

How to hang on to a number you have stopped using.

Sometimes the goal is not to move a number to a new phone, but simply to keep a number alive that you are about to stop using. Maybe a spouse has passed and you want to hold their old number a while longer. Maybe you are dropping a second line but are not ready to let that familiar number go for good. There is a quiet way to do this, and it is called parking a number.

The idea is simple. A phone number stays yours only as long as some account is actively holding it. The moment the account closes, the number goes back into the pool and, before long, gets handed to a stranger. Parking means moving the number onto a very cheap holding service whose whole job is to keep a number active without a full phone plan. You pay a small amount a month, the number stays alive and in your name, and you can bring it back to a real phone later if you ever want to.

The way you park a number is the same safe port you already know — you move the number to the parking service exactly as you would move it to a new carrier, never cancelling the old line first. Several low-cost services exist specifically for this. It is an

especially gentle option in a season of loss, when you are not ready to make a permanent decision about a loved one's number but do not want to keep paying for a full plan either.

GOOD TO KNOW

A parked number is still a live number. You can usually bring it back to a regular phone and plan later by porting it off the parking service — the same move in reverse. Nothing is permanent until you choose to let it go.

WATCH OUT

The one thing that loses a number for good is letting the account holding it close with nowhere for the number to go. If you want to keep a number, park it before the old line closes — never after.

BUSINESS LINE

23. Moving a Business Number vs a Personal One

An extra layer of care when the number is your livelihood.

If the number you are moving is a business number — the one on your cards, your truck, your signs, the one customers call — the stakes are higher than with a personal line, and a little extra care pays off. The port itself works the same way. But a business number going quiet for even an hour can mean missed calls that are missed customers, so the planning matters more.

The first wrinkle is whose name the account is under. Business lines are often under a company name or an account set up with a tax identification number rather than a personal name. The new carrier will need that to match exactly, so confirm whether the account is personal or business and gather the right account number and PIN accordingly. A mismatch between a business account and a personal name submitted to port is a frequent cause of rejection.

The second is timing. For a personal line, a quiet weekday morning is enough. For a business line, pick the slowest part of your slowest day, tell anyone who needs to reach you that the number may blink for a short while, and have a way customers can still find you during the brief handoff. If the number is truly critical, some business owners port it with help on the line so any hiccup is handled in minutes, not left to sit.

TIP

Before you move a business number, make a short list of where that number is published — website, cards, online listings — so you can confirm it still rings there after the move. The number does not change, but it is worth a check.

GOOD TO KNOW

Whether a number is business or personal, the protection is the same: never cancel the old line first, and match the account details exactly. For a livelihood number, just do it on a slow day with help close at hand.

24. Working With Bill — Your Support Plan

If you would rather not do the handoff alone.

I have been doing hands-on technology work for more than thirty years, and I have walked a great many people through keeping their number while they switch. It is routine once you have done one — but the first time, with your own number on the line, it can feel like defusing something. If you would rather have someone sit beside you and handle the handoff, that is exactly what I am here for.

A visit to your home is a flat 99 dollars. I will gather your account number and transfer PIN from the old carrier, start the port correctly with the new one, stay with you through the waiting window, and run all the after-checks so nothing is missed — and I will never let anyone cancel the old line too early. If anything we set up is not working right within thirty days, I come back and make it right at no extra charge. That is my come-back-free guarantee.

- Gather the account number, transfer PIN, and passcode from your old carrier.
- Start the port the safe way and watch it through to completion.
- Handle the eSIM or SIM and sort out iMessage and FaceTime on an iPhone.
- Recover a stalled or rejected port without ever risking your number.

The number is (330) 200-8042. If you call after hours and I cannot pick up, you will reach Sophie, my AI helper and receptionist. Sophie is friendly, takes down your name, number, and what you need, and texts it straight to me so I can get back to you. She is not a person, and she will tell you so — she is just there to make sure your message reaches me and nothing slips through.

GOOD TO KNOW

If this guide helped you switch without a scare, a short review means a lot to a local one-man shop. You can leave one at g.page/r/CSFv0jbCfFINEAE/review. Thank you.

25. Your Notes

Write down your switch details — keep this page.

Every switch has its own details, so here is a page to write down yours. Fill it in before and during the move, or I will fill it in with you on a visit. Keep it until the final old bill is paid and everything is confirmed working.

- Old carrier: _____
- Old account number: _____
- Transfer PIN (expires soon): _____
- Account passcode: _____
- Number lock turned off? (yes/no): _____
- New carrier and plan: _____
- Number being moved: _____
- Date and time port started: _____
- Date port completed: _____
- Final old bill paid? (yes/no): _____
- Things to revisit later: _____

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech, Atwater, Ohio, serving all of Portage County. Phone and text (330) 200-8042. If anything about your switch looks off in the first few weeks, call me and we will straighten it out together.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

The Safe Order

Do it in this sequence

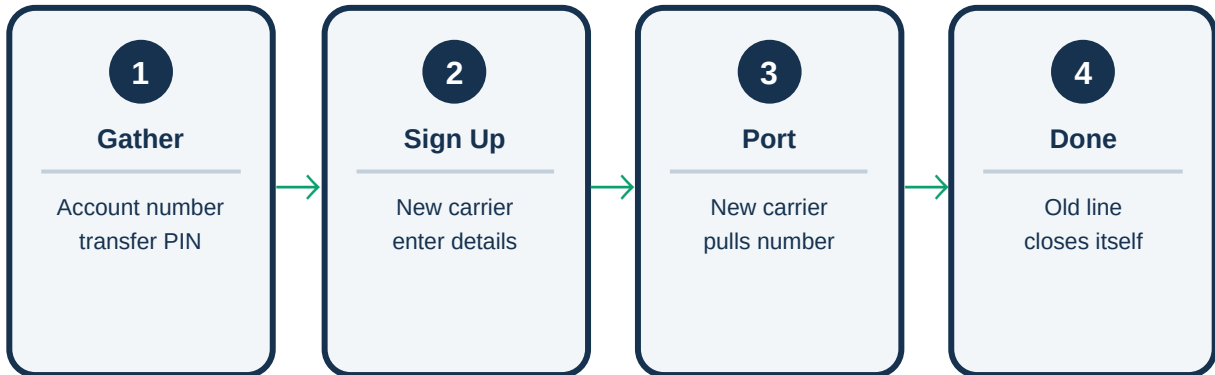
**The old line closes itself — never cancel it.**

Illustration — layout and details vary by model. Check your own device.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

What You Need First

From your OLD carrier, before you begin

Item	Where	Note
Account number	Bill or app	Not your phone number
Transfer PIN	App or call	Expires in days
Account PIN	You set it	May be asked too

Have all three in hand before you start.

Illustration — layout and details vary by model. Check your own device.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.