

Your Moving-Day Plan

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 Choose the service first, based on your internet, cell signal, and outage needs.
- 2 Sign up and request to keep your number — give them a recent bill.
- 3 Leave your old copper line active; do not cancel it yet.
- 4 Set up the box, plug in your phone, add a power backup, and test it.
- 5 Register and test 911, check your medical alert and alarm, then cancel the old line.

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Switching From a Copper Landline to VoIP — A Moving-Day Plan

A calm, step-by-step switch from copper to an internet-based home phone.

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1726 —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here's the whole plan on one page. Switching from an old copper landline to an internet-based phone (often called VoIP) is not a scramble — it's a short list of steps done in a careful order. The order is the secret: if you do them in sequence, your phone keeps working the whole time, your number comes with you, and 911 is set up before you rely on it.

- Choose the service first, based on your internet, cell signal, and outage needs.
- Sign up and request to keep your number — give them a recent bill.
- Leave your old copper line active; do not cancel it yet.
- Set up the box, plug in your phone, add a power backup, and test it.
- Register and test 911, check your medical alert and alarm, then cancel the old line.

WATCH OUT

The one step people rush is 911. On an internet phone, 911 only knows where you are if you've registered your address. Set it and test it — many providers let you dial 933 to hear it read back — before you lean on the new line.

1. Why a Plan Makes This Easy

Order is the whole secret.

When people picture switching their home phone, they imagine a stressful day where the phone goes dead, nobody can reach them, and something important gets missed. It doesn't have to be anything like that. The difference between a smooth switch and a messy one is almost entirely about the order you do things in.

Here's the idea at the heart of this guide: you set up the new phone completely before you let go of the old one. The old copper line stays alive and working the whole time you're getting the new service running. Only when everything's tested and proven do you close the old line. That way there's never a moment you're without a phone.

So this guide is a moving-day plan in the truest sense — like moving house, where you don't hand back the old keys until the new place is ready. Follow the steps in order and the whole thing becomes calm and almost boring, which is exactly what you want from your telephone.

TIP

Read the whole plan once before you start, so you can see where it's going. Then work through it a step at a time on the day. There's no prize for rushing — a slow, orderly switch is the one that goes right.

2. What VoIP Actually Is

Your call, carried over the internet.

“VoIP” is just a technical label that means your phone call travels over the internet instead of over the old copper wires. That's the whole idea. It's not complicated or worse than what you had — your grandchildren's calls have worked this way for years. It just needs power and an internet connection to do its job.

In practice, a little box sits near your internet equipment. Your regular telephone — the same cordless or corded phone you already own — plugs into a jack on that box instead of into the wall. When you pick up and dial, the box turns your call into internet data, sends it off, and brings the other person's voice back. From your chair, it feels exactly like the phone always did.

The cable company's home phone, the internet company's phone, and standalone adapters like Ooma and Vonage are all forms of VoIP. They differ in who provides them and what they cost, but the underlying idea is the same: your voice rides the internet.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because VoIP runs on power and internet, the one real trade-off versus old copper is that it stops in an outage unless you add a battery. That's a solved problem, and we'll handle it in its own step — but it's the reason the backup step matters.

3. Step One: Choose the Service

Three questions point to your answer.

Before any boxes or sign-ups, decide what kind of service fits your home. You don't need to become an expert — three plain questions sort it out, and the answers usually make the choice obvious.

- 1 Do you have reliable home internet? If yes, your internet company's phone or a VoIP adapter are easy fits. If no, lean toward a cellular home base.

- 2 How's your cell signal inside the house? Strong signal makes a cellular base a great like-for-like landline. Weak signal steers you to internet phone.
- 3 How badly do you need the phone during an outage? If it's critical, plan for a battery backup or choose a cellular base with its own battery.

There's no single “best” service — only the one that fits your particular house, internet, and signal. A neighbor's perfect choice might be wrong for you simply because your internet or cell coverage is different. Answer the three questions for your home and let them guide you.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you have good internet, an internet-based phone is usually the simplest and cheapest path. If your internet is poor or missing, a cellular home base often feels closest to the old landline. The decision chart in this guide lays it out at a glance.

4. A Closer Look at Your Options

The main paths, named even-handedly.

It helps to know the lay of the land before you pick. I don't push any one company and I don't earn a penny from any of them — here are the honest options so a decision makes sense.

- Your internet or cable company's home phone (Spectrum Voice, AT&T Phone, Kinetic Voice, Xfinity Voice). Simplest if you already have their internet.
- A standalone internet adapter like Ooma or Vonage. You plug a small box into your router and your phone into the box.
- A cellular home base from Verizon, T-Mobile, or an independent company. Runs on a cell signal, no internet account needed.

All of these let you keep your number, and all of them let you keep using the phone you already own. They mostly differ in cost, in whether they need internet, and in how they handle a power outage. Pick the family that matches your three answers, then choose a specific service inside it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Write down what you pay now for your copper line, taxes and fees included. Then compare the all-in monthly cost of each option against that real number. A buy-once adapter can drop the monthly cost to just a few dollars of taxes and fees.

5. Step Two: Sign Up and Port Your Number

Keep your number — and keep the old line on.

Once you've chosen, sign up with the new provider and tell them clearly you want to keep your existing phone number. Moving a number is called porting, and the new company does the work. Have a recent copper bill in hand — nearly everything they need is printed on it.

Give them your number, your account number, and your name and address exactly as the old company has them. Matching those details is what makes the port go smoothly; a small mismatch is the usual cause of delays. And say it plainly: you want to keep your old line active until the number has moved.

WATCH OUT

Do not cancel your copper line to “get started.” A number can only be ported while it's still active. Cancel first and you can lose your number for good. The new provider never needs your old line dead to begin — they need it alive.

6. Step Three: Leave the Old Line Active

The quiet step that protects everything.

This is less a step you do and more a step you deliberately don't do: you leave your old copper line alone. Don't cancel it, don't ask the old company to turn it off, don't do anything that would take it out of service while the switch is underway.

There are two reasons it has to stay on. First, your number can only port while the old line is active, so cancelling early risks losing it. Second, the old copper line is your safety net during the switch — while you're setting up and testing the new phone, the old one is still there ringing, so you're never without a working phone for a moment.

Yes, you'll pay for a little overlap — a few weeks where both lines exist. That small overlap is the cheapest insurance there is against losing your number or being cut off. It's worth every penny of it.

GOOD TO KNOW

When the port finishes, the old copper line very often cancels itself automatically. So “leaving it active” usually just means not rushing to close it — the system handles the ending for you at the right moment.

7. Step Four: Set Up the Box

Where it goes and how your phone connects.

When your new equipment arrives, the setup is usually simpler than it looks. For an internet phone, you place the box near your modem or router, connect it to the internet (either with a cable or, on some models, wirelessly), plug it into power, and plug your telephone into the jack marked for a phone. That's the core of it.

- 1 Put the box near your internet equipment and a power outlet.
- 2 Connect it to your internet the way its instructions show.
- 3 Plug it into power and give it a minute or two to wake up and connect.
- 4 Plug your existing telephone into the phone jack on the box.
- 5 Lift the handset and listen for a dial tone.

If you get a dial tone, the hardest part is behind you. For a cellular home base, it's even simpler — no internet to connect, just power, a good signal, and your phone plugged in. Either way, don't cancel anything yet; you've still got testing to do.

TIP

If the box has a light that shows it's online, wait for it to settle to the “good” color before you expect a dial tone. These boxes often take a couple of minutes to connect the first time. Patience saves a needless support call.

8. Step Five: Add a Power Backup

So the phone survives a storm.

This is the step that fixes the one real downside of an internet phone. Because it runs on power and internet, it goes silent in an outage unless you've added a battery. Around here, where storms knock the power out now and then, this is well worth doing while you're already set up.

- Ask your provider for their battery backup module — many cable and fiber phone services offer one that keeps the phone alive for hours.
- Put a small battery backup (a UPS) on your modem, router, and phone box so the whole chain stays up for a while.
- Choose a cellular base or a VoIP model with cellular backup built in — those come with their own battery.

- Always keep a charged cell phone as the final backup for reaching 911.

A battery backup for your internet gear is one of the most worthwhile small purchases a home can make. It keeps your phone and your internet alive through the short outages we get, and it protects the equipment from the little power flickers that wear electronics out.

GOOD TO KNOW

The key thing a battery buys you is the ability to call for help when the power's out. Even a modest one that lasts an hour or two covers most outages. There's a whole separate guide on sizing backups if you want to go deeper.

9. Step Six: Register Your 911 Address

The step you must not skip.

Here's the step that matters most for your safety, so give it full attention. On an internet or cellular phone, there's no fixed copper wire for 911 to trace back to your house. Instead, your provider keeps a “registered location” — the street address they hand to the 911 dispatcher when you call. If that address is wrong or missing, help could go to the wrong place.

So when you set up the service, enter your real home address as the registered location, and double-check every line of it. This is usually done on the provider's web page or app during setup, or you can ask them to enter it for you. Don't assume it's right — confirm it.

WATCH OUT

If you ever move the box to another home — say, south for the winter — you must update the registered address to where you actually are. In an emergency, help is sent to whatever address is on file, not wherever you happen to be standing.

10. Step Seven: Test 911

Dial 933 to hear your address read back.

Registering your address is only half the job — you want to confirm it actually took. Many internet phone providers let you dial 933 to hear your registered address read back to you, without placing a real 911 call. It's a quiet little test that gives you real peace of mind.

Dial 933 on the new line and listen. A recorded voice should read back the address on file and the number emergency responders would see. If it matches your home, you're set. If

it's wrong, blank, or the test isn't available, call your provider and get the address corrected before you rely on the line.

Not every provider offers the 933 test, so confirm yours does. If it doesn't, ask them how to verify your registered address another way. The point is simply to know, with certainty, that a 911 call from this phone would bring help to your door.

WATCH OUT

Dialing 933 is a safe test and does not call 911. Never dial 911 itself “just to check” — that ties up emergency lines. Use 933 if your provider offers it, or ask them for their approved way to verify.

11. Step Eight: Test the Medical Alert

Call the company, then press the button.

If you or someone in the house wears a medical alert pendant, this step is not optional. Many older alert devices were built to dial out over a copper landline. When the service underneath changes, the button can get pressed and the signal may never reach the monitoring center — and it can fail silently, with no sign anything's wrong.

So before you finish the switch, call the medical alert company and tell them you've moved to an internet or cellular phone. They'll tell you whether your device works on the new line or whether you need a cellular version that doesn't depend on the phone at all. Then do a live test — most have a test button or a monthly test mode — so you know for certain it reaches help.

WATCH OUT

Never assume a medical alert “just works” after the switch because the phone has a dial tone. The button sends a signal differently than a voice call. Test it with the monitoring company on the line. This is life-safety, not a detail to guess at.

12. Step Nine: Test the Alarm System

Security and fire panels need checking too.

The same caution applies to a home security or fire alarm panel. Many were built to call the monitoring center over a copper line, and over an internet phone they may send garbled signals or not get through at all. A smoke alarm that can't reach the monitoring center is worse than no warning at all, because you'd think you're covered.

Call your alarm company before you finish switching and tell them what you've done. They'll put the system in test mode and confirm the signals are reaching them, or they'll recommend a cellular monitoring add-on that doesn't rely on the phone line. Don't skip this because the system seems fine — “seems fine” and “reaches help” are different things.

WATCH OUT

Always notify the alarm company BEFORE you switch, not after. If you test without warning them, they may dispatch help for a real alarm. Call first, arrange a test, then confirm every signal gets through.

13. Step Ten: Confirm the Port Finished

Make sure your number has truly moved.

Before you even think about cancelling the old line, make sure your number has actually finished moving. The cut-over happens on a scheduled day near the end of the port, and you want to see it with your own eyes, not just assume it happened.

- 1 Call your own number from a cell phone — it should ring on the new service.
- 2 Pick up the new phone and make a call out; check your caller ID is right.
- 3 Confirm the old copper line has gone quiet and no longer rings your number.
- 4 Leave yourself a voicemail on the new service and retrieve it.

If your number rings on the new phone and the old line has gone silent, the port is done. If the old line still rings your number, the port hasn't completed yet — wait, and do not cancel anything until it has. Rushing here is how numbers get lost.

GOOD TO KNOW

A port sometimes finishes later in the day than you expect. If your number hasn't flipped by evening on cut-over day, give it until the next business day before you worry — and keep the old line active in the meantime.

14. Step Eleven: Only Now, Cancel the Old Line

The last step, and never before.

Here's the step everyone wants to rush to, and the whole plan has been built to make sure you do it last. Once your number has moved, 911 is registered and tested, your medical alert and alarm are confirmed, and the new phone is working, then — and only then — is it safe to let the old copper line close.

In many cases you won't even have to call anyone, because the old line cancels itself when the number ports away. If it doesn't, call the old company and tell them the line can be closed. Watch for a final bill covering the last partial month and any fees — that's normal and expected, not a sign anything went wrong.

TIP

Before you close the old line, do one last look around the house for anything else plugged into a phone jack — a fax machine, an old answering machine, a second phone in the bedroom. Make sure each one is handled before the copper goes quiet.

15. What Cut-Over Day Feels Like

Usually quieter than you'd expect.

People brace themselves for cut-over day as if it'll be a dramatic event. In reality it's usually so quiet you might miss it. At some point during the scheduled day, your number simply stops working on the old line and starts ringing on the new one. There's no alarm, no phone call, no fanfare — it just flips.

Because you set up and tested the new phone ahead of time, there's nothing to scramble for in the moment. You don't have to be on the phone with anyone or stay glued to the house. The most you'll do is give your own number a test call to confirm it landed on the new service.

GOOD TO KNOW

If the new service has been running on a temporary number while you waited, cut-over is when your real number quietly takes its place. Don't be thrown by the temporary number in the meantime — it's just a placeholder until the real one arrives.

16. A Simple Timeline

How the days usually line up.

Here's the shape of a typical switch, so you can see where it's going and nothing feels like it's stalling when it's just following the normal rhythm. Yours may run faster or slower.

- 1 Day one: choose the service, sign up, request the port with a recent bill.
- 2 A day or two later: the new box arrives; set it up and add a battery.
- 3 Right away: register your 911 address and test it with 933 if allowed.
- 4 Same week: call the medical alert and alarm companies and arrange tests.
- 5 About one to two weeks out: the number ports on the scheduled cut-over day.
- 6 After cut-over, once everything's tested: let the old copper line close.

Through all of it, your old line keeps working, so none of these days leave you without a phone. The waiting is just waiting — not a stretch of being cut off. That's the comfort the plan is designed to give you.

TIP

Start your switch during a calm stretch, not right before a trip or a week you're expecting important calls. There's no rush, and an unhurried switch is the one that goes smoothly.

17. Your Phones Probably Still Work

You likely don't need to buy new ones.

Here's a bit of relief for the moving day: in almost every case, the telephones you already own will work with the new service. Modern cordless phones from Panasonic, VTech, and AT&T-brand plug into a jack on the new box, not into the wall copper directly, so they don't care how the call travels. The handset on your counter stays the same.

If you decide to replace a handset while you're at it, it's a nice chance to get senior-friendly features — big buttons, a loud or boosted earpiece, talking caller ID that announces who's calling, and a block button for junk calls. But that's an optional upgrade, not something the switch requires.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep at least one old-fashioned corded phone in the house if you can. On some setups a simple corded phone will work off the box's battery when a cordless base won't — a handy backup during an outage, and it costs almost nothing.

18. What About Your Internet?

If the copper carried DSL too.

For some folks, the copper line doesn't just carry the phone — it also carries an older style of internet called DSL. If that's your situation, switching the phone and retiring the copper affects both. The good news is the replacement is almost always an upgrade: a faster, steadier internet than DSL ever was.

If your internet rides on that old line, talk to your provider about the phone and the internet together, so you're not solving them separately or ending up with a gap. Often they'll move you to a newer internet and set up the phone over it in the same visit. Just make sure the phone piece and its backup get handled, not forgotten amid the excitement about faster speeds.

GOOD TO KNOW

Faster internet is genuinely worth having — it makes video calls with the grandkids smoother and streaming far less frustrating. The phone change riding along with it is the small tail on a good dog.

19. Common Moving-Day Mistakes

The slip-ups that cause the headaches.

After guiding a lot of people through this, the same few mistakes come up again and again. None of them are your fault — the companies don't make the order clear — but knowing them ahead saves a lot of grief.

- Cancelling the copper line before the number moves — it can be lost for good. Never cancel first.
- Skipping the 911 registration, then assuming it works.
- Forgetting the power backup, then being surprised the phone's dead in a storm.
- Assuming the medical alert or alarm still works — test both.
- Doing the switch in a rush right before a trip or an important week.

Every one of these is avoided by the plan itself: keep the old line active, set up and test everything first, cancel last. If you follow the order, you sidestep all of them without having to remember each one individually.

WATCH OUT

If anyone pressures you to decide or cancel right now — on the phone or at the door — that pressure is itself the warning sign. A real switch can always wait a day while you think it over.

20. Telling Your Family What Changed

So the people who help you know how it works.

A lot of the calls I get about this come from adult kids helping a parent from out of town. If that's your situation — on either end — it's worth writing down a few things so everyone knows how the phone works now and how to reach the person if it's ever down.

- Which company provides the phone now, and the account phone number.
- Whether there's a power-outage backup, and roughly how long it lasts.
- That the medical alert and alarm were checked and tested after the switch.
- The best backup way to reach the person if the home phone is down — usually a cell number.

It sounds fussy, but when a storm knocks the power out, the family member two states away will be awfully glad they know whether the home phone still works and how else to get through. A few written lines save a lot of worry later.

21. If You Live Alone

Building extra safety into the setup.

If you live by yourself, the phone isn't just a convenience — it's a lifeline, and that deserves a little extra care in how you set things up. The goal is simple: make sure you can always reach help, even in a storm or an outage.

- Choose a service with a battery backup, or a cellular base that has one built in, so the phone survives a power cut.
- Keep a charged cell phone, even a simple one, as your final way to reach 911.
- If you use a medical alert, make it a cellular one that doesn't depend on the phone line, and test it monthly.
- Write your address by the phone — in a panic it's easy to blank, and a helper or guest may need it.

None of this is meant to worry you. It's the opposite — a few small choices during the switch mean you never have to wonder whether the phone will be there when you need it

most. This is the kind of setup I'm always glad to put together for someone living on their own.

22. Questions About Switching

Quick, plain answers.

Will I lose my number? No — you port it, and as long as you don't cancel the old line first, it comes right along.

Will I be without a phone during the switch? No — the old line works the whole time; the number flips on one scheduled day at the end.

Is the new phone harder to use? No — the handset on your counter works the same. The only new thing is a box near your internet gear or in a spot with good cell signal.

What if the power goes out? With a battery backup or a cellular base, the phone keeps working for a while. Always keep a charged cell phone for emergencies as well.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your question isn't here, it's probably one I've answered many times. There's no charge to ask a question over the phone — just call.

23. A Few Plain Words to Know

The jargon, translated.

The sign-up pages and instructions are full of terms that don't mean much to normal people. Here's the short translation so nothing throws you on moving day.

- VoIP / digital voice — your call carried over the internet.
- Porting — moving your phone number to the new provider.
- Registered location — the address your provider sends to 911.
- Cut-over — the scheduled moment your number flips to the new service.
- UPS / battery backup — a battery that keeps gear alive in an outage.
- Cellular base — a box that runs on a cell signal, no internet needed.

TIP

Keep this little list with your guide. When a sign-up page or an instruction sheet uses one of these words, you'll know exactly what it's talking about.

24. Setting Up Voicemail and Caller ID

The everyday features come right along.

People worry the familiar features will vanish, but they come right along. Voicemail, caller ID, and call waiting are standard on nearly every internet phone. The only difference is where you set them up: instead of a code from the old phone company, you'll usually use a simple web page or an app — or just ask the provider to turn it all on for you.

Some newer services add nice touches, like emailing you a voicemail or even typing out the message so you can read it. If you've got hearing trouble, that reading feature is a small blessing. None of it is required, though — you can keep things exactly as simple as you like.

GOOD TO KNOW

If setting up voicemail on a web page sounds like a headache, it's a two-minute job on a visit, and I'll write the steps down so you can change your greeting later without me.

25. What a Technician Visit Looks Like

If your switch involves an install appointment.

If your switch involves a technician — common when a provider is running a new fiber line to the house — knowing what happens takes the mystery out of it. A technician runs a thin line to the house, mounts a small box (inside, or in the garage or basement), and that box, which needs a power outlet nearby, is what your phone and internet run through.

The appointment usually takes a couple of hours. Be home, clear a path to your existing equipment, and keep a phone handy to test before the tech leaves. This is the moment to ask the right questions while someone knowledgeable is standing there.

- Ask the tech to test your home phone and 911 before they leave.
- Ask where the backup battery is and how you'll know when to replace it.
- Point out any medical alert or alarm so the tech knows it's there.

TIP

If being home for a technician and asking the right questions feels like a lot, I'm glad to be there for the appointment with you and make sure nothing gets missed.

26. Snowbirds and Travel

Taking the phone with you.

One quiet bonus of an internet or cellular phone is that it can travel. A VoIP adapter or a cellular base can go with you to a winter place — your home number rings wherever you plug the box in and have internet or signal. The old copper line could never have done that.

The one thing that must travel with you is your 911 registered address. If you carry the box to Florida for the winter, update the registered address to where you actually are, so a 911 call sends help to the right place. Change it back when you come home. It's a two-minute task that could matter enormously in an emergency.

WATCH OUT

Never leave a traveling phone box registered to the wrong address. In an emergency, help would be sent hundreds of miles away. Update it every single time you relocate the box.

27. When to Let Me Handle It

You don't have to do moving day alone.

I wrote this plan so you'd understand the switch and feel calm about it. But understanding the steps and wanting to do them all yourself are two different things, and there's no shame in handing it off. Choosing the service, setting up the box, porting your number, adding a battery, registering 911, and testing your alarm is exactly the kind of visit I do every week.

I come to you, here in Portage County and the nearby towns — Ravenna, Kent, Streetsboro, Aurora, Rootstown, and around Atwater. The first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and if a problem can be handled without a trip, I offer remote help too. If you're not completely happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's the whole deal, no fine print.

TIP

When you call, my assistant Sophie may answer and take down the details so I can call you back — she's there so you always reach a friendly voice, not a dead end.

28. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor

The short, honest version.

After 30+ years of professional experience helping folks with exactly this kind of change, here's the plain advice I'd give over the fence. Don't dread the switch — it's a short list of steps, not a crisis. Do them in order and you'll never be without a phone.

Choose the service that fits your home. Keep your number by porting, and leave the old line active until it moves. Add a battery so the phone survives a storm. Register and test 911, and check your medical alert and alarm. Then, last of all, let the old copper go. That's the whole plan.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels like a lot, that's normal. You can hand the whole thing to me — the choosing, the port, the box, the backup, the 911 setup, and the testing — and I'll handle it in one visit so your phone comes out working and safe.

29. Why Switch at All?

The upsides, honestly laid out.

You might be wondering why go through any of this if the copper phone still works. Fair question. For many people the switch isn't optional forever — the phone companies are gradually retiring copper, and when the notice comes for your street, you'll need a plan. But there are real upsides to switching even before you're forced to.

- It often costs less — a buy-once adapter can cut the phone part of your bill to just a few dollars of taxes and fees a month.
- Nice features come included: voicemail, caller ID, call waiting, and often voicemail emailed or typed out for you.
- Call-blocking tools for junk calls are usually built in.
- If the copper also carried old DSL internet, the switch usually brings a much faster, steadier internet along with it.

The one thing copper does better is ride through a power outage on its own, and that's exactly what a battery backup restores. Once you've solved the outage question, the newer phone matches the old one for dependability and usually beats it on cost and features.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to switch the day you read this. If your copper still works and no retirement notice has come, you can wait — just have your plan ready so a sudden letter doesn't send you scrambling.

30. Watching the Price

Compare the all-in cost, not the headline.

Cost is one of the quiet reasons switching can be good news, but only if you compare honestly. A traditional copper landline is often one of the more expensive ways to have a phone once you add up the line charge, the long distance, and the taxes and fees that pile on. Many people pay for features they never use.

When you look at a replacement, compare the all-in monthly cost, not the headline number. A buy-once adapter can drop your monthly phone cost to just taxes and fees. A cellular base is usually a flat monthly amount. A cable-company phone depends heavily on your bundle and any promotion.

- Dig out last month's copper bill and find the true total, taxes included.
- Note which features you actually use: voicemail, caller ID, long distance.
- Compare the all-in cost of each option against that real number.
- Watch for promotional prices that jump after a year.

TIP

Prices change constantly, so I won't print numbers that'll be stale by next season. Check each provider's current pricing, or let me pull the real figures for your situation on a visit.

31. Faxing Without a Fax Line

If you still need to send a fax.

If you still fax now and then — some doctors' offices and lawyers still ask for it — know that a fax machine and an internet phone don't always get along. Fax machines were built for the steady copper line, and the small hiccups of an internet call can scramble a fax. So this is one device worth thinking about before you switch, not after.

The common answer is an online fax service. It sends and receives faxes over the internet from your computer, a phone app, or a scan-to-email printer — no dedicated fax line at all. Free versions cap how many pages a day you can send; paid plans give you a dedicated

fax number. For anything medical, the service should sign a privacy agreement to handle health information properly.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you only fax a page or two a year, you may not need a fax setup at all — many places now accept a clear photo or a scan by email instead. Ask before you go to any trouble.

32. Other Things on the Phone Jack

Answering machines, second phones, and dialers.

Your main phone may not be the only thing using a wall jack. A standalone answering machine, a second phone in the bedroom, a fax machine, a medical alert base, or an alarm panel might all be quietly relying on the old copper. Before the copper goes quiet, make a quick walk-through list of everything plugged into a phone jack so nothing's forgotten.

Most will simply plug into the new phone box instead of the wall and carry right on — an answering machine or a second handset usually works fine. The two that need real attention are the medical alert and the alarm, which we covered in their own steps, and a fax machine, which may do better on an internet fax service.

WATCH OUT

An old answering machine will work, but many new services include free voicemail that's easier to use and even emails you the message. Worth a look before you fuss with the old box on moving day.

33. The Bottom Line

A calm switch, done in the right order.

So here's where the plan leaves you. Switching from copper to an internet-based phone isn't a dreaded upheaval — it's a handful of steps done in a careful order, with the old line kept alive as your safety net until everything new is set up, tested, and proven.

Choose the service, keep your number, set up the box, add a battery, register and test 911, check your medical alert and alarm, and only then close the old line. Follow that order and you'll barely notice the change at the kitchen phone — same number, same handset, same ring — except that it's now on a line built for the years ahead. That's a good day's work, and it's entirely within your reach.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

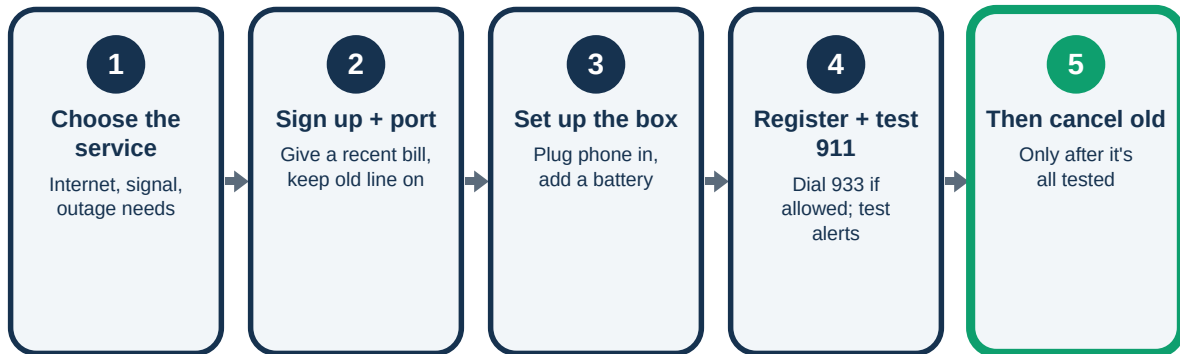
Keep this by the phone. I want to... Do this. Pick the right service — answer three questions: do I have reliable internet, how's my cell signal, do I need the phone in an outage. Keep my number — have the NEW provider port it; never cancel the old line first. Set it up — plug your phone into the box, listen for a dial tone, add a battery backup. Protect 911 — register your address and dial 933 to hear it read back if your provider allows. Protect my devices — call the medical alert and alarm companies before switching and test after. Finish safely — confirm the number moved and everything's tested, THEN let the old line close. Get help — call Bill: (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Your Moving-Day Steps

In order, so your phone never goes dark



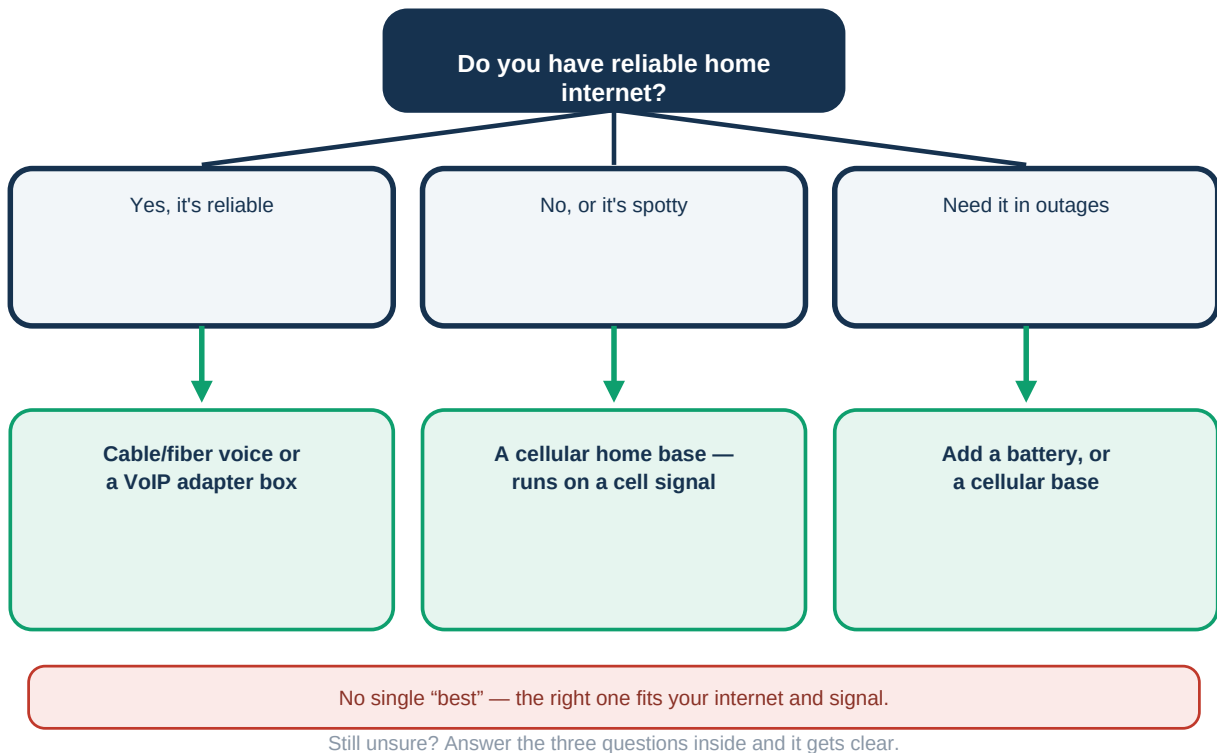
Leave the old copper line active until the very last step.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Which Service Fits Your Home?

Start at the top and follow your answer



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

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