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BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Internet-Provider Email Spectrum, AT&T & SBCGlobal

Keeping your old address working, safe from scams, and moved when it's time — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for anyone with an email address from their internet company

Take your time — and never cancel internet before reading Part 6

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For Spectrum/Roadrunner, AT&T, SBCGlobal, BellSouth & Ameritech addresses · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the email address that came from your internet company: Roadrunner, Spectrum, Charter, Time Warner, AT&T, SBCGlobal, BellSouth, Ameritech and their cousins. Start with Part 1, then turn to the part for your company. If you are thinking about switching or canceling internet service, read Part 6 first. Read in any order and at your own pace.

Part 1 — Getting Started

1 A Note from Bill
2 What "Provider Email" Is, and Why It's Fragile
3 Which Address Do You Have? A Quick Decoder
4 Your Half-Hour Safety Check

Part 2 — Spectrum & Roadrunner Email

5 Signing In to Spectrum Email
6 Forgot Your Spectrum Email Password
7 Spectrum's Use-It-or-Lose-It Rules
8 Storage, Attachment Limits and Housekeeping
9 Spectrum Settings for Mail Apps
10 Forwarding Spectrum Mail to a New Address

Part 3 — AT&T, SBCGlobal & Other Provider Addresses

11 AT&T Mail: One Family, Many Names
12 Signing In to AT&T Mail
13 Forgot Your AT&T Password, or Locked Out
14 The Secure Mail Key, Explained
15 AT&T Settings for Mail Apps
16 Keeping an AT&T Address Alive
17 Other Provider Addresses: Xfinity, Frontier and Kinetic

Part 4 — Reading Your Mail on Phones and Computers

18 Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad
19 Adding It to the Gmail App (Android or iPhone)
20 Adding It to Outlook on a Windows PC
21 When Mail Stops Arriving or Won't Send

Part 5 — Scams and Hacked Accounts

22 The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails
23 Fake Email Support Phone Numbers
24 If Your Provider Email Was Hacked

Part 6 — Moving Off Safely

25 Should You Move? An Honest Look
26 Choosing and Setting Up a New Address
27 Bringing Your Old Mail and Contacts Along
28 Updating Your Accounts: The Important-Accounts List
29 Telling People and Keeping the Old Address Alive
30 Canceling or Switching Internet: The Order of Operations

Part 7 — Getting Help

31 Helping a Parent with an Old Provider Address
32 When to Call Bill
33 Your Provider Email Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting Started

What an internet-provider email address is, why it is more fragile than it looks, which one you have, and a half-hour safety check that protects it.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If your email address ends in something like **rr.com**, **twc.com**, **charter.net**, **att.net**, **sbcglobal.net**, **bellsouth.net** or **ameritech.net**, this guide is for you. Those addresses came from your internet company, often many years ago, and a lot of people have used one for twenty years or more. Your doctor, your bank, your grandchildren and your church all know it.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped people make sense of their technology, and I serve folks right here in Portage County, Ohio. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time.

Who this guide is for

- Anyone with a Roadrunner, Spectrum, Time Warner, Charter or Bright House email address.
- Anyone with an AT&T Mail address, including the older SBCGlobal, BellSouth, Ameritech, Pacific Bell, Southwestern Bell and Prodigy names.
- Anyone thinking about switching internet companies who wants to know what happens to their email.
- Grown children and caregivers helping a parent keep an old address safe, or move off it gently.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

By the end you'll know how to sign in, fix a forgotten password, set the address up on your phone and computer, spot the fake "mailbox full" emails that target these accounts, and, if you decide to, move to a new address without losing a single important message or account.

An honest promise about this topic

In most of my guides I tell you that you can't break anything by exploring. That's mostly true here. Reading mail, changing a setting or adding the account to a phone won't hurt anything. But there is one step that really matters: **canceling or switching your internet service can end your email address**, sometimes with little warning. So before you call to cancel, please read Chapter 30, *Canceling or Switching Internet: The Order of Operations*. That one chapter can save you a lot of heartache.

You're never stuck alone

If anything in this guide feels like too much, call or text me at **(330) 200-8042**. We'll sort it out together, with no judgment. Email trouble is one of the most common things people ask me about.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What "Provider Email" Is, and Why It's Fragile

When you signed up for internet service years ago, the company usually handed you a free email address along with it. Time Warner and Charter gave out Roadrunner and Charter addresses; SBC, Ameritech and BellSouth gave out theirs. Over the years those companies merged and renamed themselves, but many of the old addresses kept working. That's why your address may carry a company name that hasn't existed for years.

The good news

- Your address still works, and for many people it will keep working for a long time.
- You can read it on a phone, a tablet and a computer, just like Gmail or Outlook.
- People already know it, and you don't have to learn anything new to keep using it.

The catch

A provider address is tied to a **business relationship**, not just to you. The internet company owns the address and sets the rules. Those rules can change, and they do. Here's what that means in practice:

- If you cancel your internet, the address may be locked or deleted. Spectrum and AT&T handle this very differently, and we'll go through each in Chapter 7, *Spectrum's Use-It-or-Lose-It Rules* and Chapter 16, *Keeping an AT&T Address Alive*.
- If you don't sign in for a long stretch, the mailbox can be locked or emptied.
- Behind the scenes, the company may move your mail to a new system. AT&T's mail now runs on Yahoo's systems, and Spectrum reorganized its email in 2025. These moves sometimes break the settings in your mail app.
- Because these addresses are old and well known, scammers love to target them with fake warnings. See Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails*.

GOOD TO KNOW

This isn't a reason to panic

Nothing in this chapter means you have to change your address today. It means you should know the rules, keep your password and recovery details current, and have a plan before you ever switch internet companies. That's what the rest of this guide gives you.

TIP

If you also use Yahoo or AOL

AT&T Mail is now powered by Yahoo, so some screens will look like Yahoo Mail. Our separate Yahoo & AOL Mail guide covers Yahoo's own settings in more depth.

CHAPTER 3

Which Address Do You Have? A Quick Decoder

Look at the part of your email address after the @ sign. That ending, called the **domain**, tells you which company is in charge of your mail today, even if the name on it is decades old.

If your address ends in…	The company in charge today	Go to
rr.com (including ones like neo.rr.com), roadrunner.com, twc.com	Spectrum	Part 2
charter.net	Spectrum	Part 2
brighthouse.com	Spectrum	Part 2
att.net, currently.com	AT&T (mail powered by Yahoo)	Part 3
sbcglobal.net, ameritech.net, bellsouth.net	AT&T (mail powered by Yahoo)	Part 3
pacbell.net, swbell.net, prodigy.net, flash.net, snet.net, nvbell.net, wans.net	AT&T (mail powered by Yahoo)	Part 3
comcast.net	Xfinity (Comcast), moving to Yahoo	Part 3
frontier.com	Yahoo, after Frontier handed it over	Part 3
windstream.net and other Kinetic addresses	Kinetic by Windstream	Part 3

GOOD TO KNOW

Ohio note: why so many "ameritech" and "sbcglobal" addresses

Ohio was Ameritech territory before SBC bought it, and SBC later became today's AT&T. That's why so many Northeast Ohio families have ameritech.net or sbcglobal.net addresses. Both are AT&T addresses now.

Not sure? Here's a quick test

1. Write your full email address on a piece of paper, exactly as you give it to people.
2. Circle everything after the @.
3. Find that ending in the table above. That tells you which part of this guide to read.

4. If your ending isn't in the table, the same ideas still apply. Call your internet company, or call me, and ask who runs your mail today.

HEADS UP

Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook and iCloud are different

If your address ends in gmail.com, yahoo.com, aol.com, outlook.com, hotmail.com or icloud.com, it is *not* a provider address. It belongs to you no matter which internet company you use, and it won't disappear if you switch. Those addresses have their own guides.

CHAPTER 4

Your Half-Hour Safety Check

Before we get into the details, here's a short checklist I'd love everyone with a provider address to do once. It protects you against the two most common problems: getting locked out, and losing mail when something changes.

The checklist

1. **Know your password.** Sign in once on the company's website, not just in your phone's mail app. If you can't, fix that first with Chapter 6, *Forgot Your Spectrum Email Password* or Chapter 13, *Forgot Your AT&T Password, or Locked Out*.
2. **Check your recovery details.** Make sure the account has a current cell phone number and a second email address on file, so you can reset the password if you forget it.
3. **Write down your server settings.** Copy the settings for your company from Chapter 9, *Spectrum Settings for Mail Apps* or Chapter 15, *AT&T Settings for Mail Apps* into the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 33, *Your Provider Email Cheat-Sheet*.
4. **Make a short list of important senders.** Your bank, pharmacy, doctor's portal, Social Security, Medicare, insurance and any shopping sites. If you ever move, these are the ones to update first. See Chapter 28, *Updating Your Accounts: The Important-Accounts List*.
5. **Sign in on the website every few months.** Some companies treat a mailbox you only read through an app differently from one you sign in to. A quick website sign-in is cheap insurance.
6. **Decide whether you need a backup address.** Even if you keep your old address, having a free Gmail or Outlook.com address as a backup is wise. See Chapter 26, *Choosing and Setting Up a New Address*.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this half hour matters

Nearly every email emergency I'm asked about comes down to a forgotten password, an old recovery phone number, or a canceled internet account. This checklist heads off all three.

STAY SAFE

Do this from a website you typed yourself

When you sign in for this check, type **spectrum.net** or **att.com** into your browser yourself. Never use a link from an email that says your account needs checking. See Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails* for why.

— Bill

PART 2

Spectrum & Roadrunner Email

Roadrunner, Time Warner, Charter and Bright House addresses all live at Spectrum now. Here's how to sign in, reset a password, keep the mailbox alive and set it up in a mail app.

CHAPTER 5

Signing In to Spectrum Email

Spectrum looks after every old Roadrunner (rr.com and roadrunner.com), Time Warner (twc.com), Charter (charter.net) and Bright House address. You can read that mail in two ways: on Spectrum's website, or in a mail app on your phone or computer. Signing in on the website now and then is important, so let's start there.

Reading your mail on Spectrum's website

1. Open your web browser and type **spectrum.net** yourself, then press Enter.
2. Choose **Sign In**.
3. Sign in with your Spectrum username and password. If your email address is your Spectrum login, use your **full** email address, including everything after the @ sign.
4. Look for the **Email** or **Check Email** link and choose it. Your inbox opens.

GOOD TO KNOW

Spectrum reorganized its email in 2025

In October 2025 Spectrum moved email management into the regular spectrum.net account and cleaned out email addresses that were no longer connected to an active Spectrum account. If you used to go to a separate "webmail" page and it now sends you to spectrum.net, that's why.

If you don't see an Email link

If you sign in to spectrum.net and there's no Email or Check Email link, your address may not be connected to that Spectrum account. That happens when an address was set up under a different person in the household, or under an older account. Try signing in with the email address itself as the username. If that doesn't work, call Spectrum using the number on your bill and ask them to check whether the address is linked to your account.

HEADS UP

Newer customers may not get email at all

Spectrum has stopped handing out email addresses to many newer customers. If you've only had Spectrum for a year or two and never had a Spectrum address, there may not be one to find. That's normal, and a free Gmail or Outlook.com address is a fine choice. See Chapter 26, *Choosing and Setting Up a New Address*.

TIP

Bookmark it the safe way

Once you're signed in to the real spectrum.net, add it to your browser's favorites or bookmarks. From then on, use that bookmark instead of any link in an email.

CHAPTER 6

Forgot Your Spectrum Email Password

It happens to everyone. Often the password has been saved in a phone or computer for years, and nobody remembers what it was until the phone is replaced. Here's how to reset it safely.

Reset it on spectrum.net

1. Type **spectrum.net** into your browser yourself.
2. Choose **Sign In**, then choose the **Forgot Username or Password?** link under the sign-in boxes.
3. When asked for your username, enter your **full** email address.
4. Follow the prompts to verify who you are. Spectrum may text or email a code, or ask for account details.
5. Create a new password. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe at home.

After you reset it: update every device

This is the step people forget. Your iPhone, tablet and computer still have the *old* password saved. Each one will start complaining that the password is wrong. That's normal, and it isn't a hack.

1. On an iPhone or iPad, open **Settings > Apps > Mail > Mail Accounts**, tap your Spectrum account, and type the new password where it asks.
2. In the Gmail app, open the account and enter the new password when prompted.
3. On a computer, open your mail program and enter the new password when it asks.

STAY SAFE

Spectrum will never ask for your password by email

If an email or text asks you to "confirm" your Spectrum password, or sends a link to reset it that you didn't ask for, don't click. Go to spectrum.net yourself. See Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails*.

TIP

Use a different recovery email

Spectrum's community moderators advise using a recovery email address that is different from the Spectrum address itself. If you ever get locked out of the Spectrum address, a code sent to that same address won't help.

CHAPTER 7

Spectrum's Use-It-or-Lose-It Rules

This is the most important chapter in Part 2. Spectrum's email rules are strict, and they are written in Spectrum's own help pages. Here's what they say, in plain English.

If this happens…	Here's what Spectrum says
No sign-in for about six months	Spectrum locks the mailbox. Incoming mail is turned away while it's locked. Your old mail is still there as long as your Spectrum Internet account is active.
No sign-in for about 400 days	The contents of the mailbox may be permanently deleted.
Internet service ends	All the mailboxes on that account, and everything in them, may be deleted. Deleted mail cannot be recovered.

How to unlock a locked mailbox

1. Type **spectrum.net** into your browser and sign in.
2. Choose the **Email** link. Signing in to the mailbox unlocks it.
3. Send yourself a test message from another address to make sure mail is arriving again.

HEADS UP

Reading mail in an app may not count

Spectrum's rules talk about signing in to your account. If you only read your mail through an app on your phone, I recommend also signing in on spectrum.net every couple of months. Put a reminder on your calendar.

STAY SAFE

Canceling Spectrum Internet is the big one

If you cancel Spectrum Internet, Spectrum says your mailboxes and their contents are subject to deletion. Community reports suggest some addresses last a short while afterward, but there's no promise. Plan your move *before* you cancel, using Chapter 30, *Canceling or Switching Internet: The Order of Operations*.

GOOD TO KNOW

What about moving within Spectrum?

Moving house but keeping Spectrum Internet on the same account is generally fine for your email. If a new account is opened in a different name, though, ask Spectrum to make sure your email address moves with it.

CHAPTER 8

Storage, Attachment Limits and Housekeeping

A Spectrum mailbox is smaller than a free Gmail or Outlook.com mailbox, so it can fill up if you keep everything. Here are Spectrum's published limits.

Limit	Spectrum's number
Mailbox size	5 GB per email account
Email accounts	Up to five email accounts per Spectrum Internet customer
Largest message	About 30 MB per message, including attachments
Contacts	Up to 500 contacts per email account

When it's getting full

1. Sign in on spectrum.net and open your email.
2. Empty the **Trash** and **Spam** folders first. They often hold hundreds of messages.
3. Sort your inbox by size, if your mail screen offers it, and delete old messages with big photo attachments you already have saved elsewhere.
4. Look in the **Sent** folder too. Every photo you've ever emailed is stored there.

TIP

Sending big videos

A 30 MB limit means most phone videos are too big to email. Share them with a link instead, using iCloud, Google Photos or OneDrive. Our AirDrop, Quick Share & Sending Big Files guide shows how.

SCAM ALERT

"Your mailbox is full" warnings

A real full mailbox simply starts bouncing new mail. Spectrum won't email you a link to "upgrade your storage" or "verify to avoid deletion." Those messages are phishing. See Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails*.

CHAPTER 9

Spectrum Settings for Mail Apps

Most mail apps set up a Spectrum address automatically. But if your app asks for "server settings," or your mail suddenly stops working, these are the numbers you need. Spectrum recommends **IMAP**, which keeps your phone, tablet and computer in sync.

Your address ends in	Incoming (IMAP) server	Outgoing (SMTP) server
rr.com, roadrunner.com, twc.com	mail.twc.com	mail.twc.com
charter.net	mobile.charter.net	mobile.charter.net
brighthouse.com	mail.brighthouse.com	mail.brighthouse.com

Setting	What to enter
Account type	IMAP
Incoming port	993, with SSL turned on
Outgoing port	587, with authentication required
Username	Your **full** email address
Password	Your Spectrum email password

HEADS UP

If the server name doesn't work

Spectrum has a few older server names for particular regions. If the server above won't connect, sign in at spectrum.net and search Spectrum's support pages for **Spectrum Email Server Settings**; the full table there lists every domain. Never use settings from a website selling "email support."

TIP

Write them in the cheat-sheet

Copy your three lines (incoming server, outgoing server and ports) into the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 33, *Your Provider Email Cheat-Sheet*. The next time you get a new phone, setup takes two minutes instead of an afternoon.

CHAPTER 10

Forwarding Spectrum Mail to a New Address

Forwarding means mail sent to your old Spectrum address is automatically passed along to a new one. It's a helpful bridge while you tell people about a new address. Spectrum has changed how forwarding works, so here's the honest picture.

What Spectrum's help pages say

- On some accounts, Spectrum's email settings include an **Email Forwarding** switch under the account settings, with room for up to five forwarding addresses.
- Spectrum's own page warns that if your screen doesn't match, automatic forwarding is no longer offered for your mailbox. Community moderators explain that if forwarding was already on, it keeps working, but once it's turned off it can't be turned back on.

HEADS UP

If forwarding is already on, leave it alone

Because forwarding may not come back once it's switched off, don't turn it off "just to test."

If you don't have forwarding: the easy alternative

Instead of forwarding, add your Spectrum address to the same app as your new address. The Gmail app, the iPhone Mail app and Outlook can all show several accounts at once. You'll see mail to both addresses in one place, and you can still reply from the old one. See Chapter 19, *Adding It to the Gmail App (Android or iPhone)* and Chapter 18, *Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Forwarding stops when the mailbox stops

Forwarding only works while your Spectrum mailbox exists. If you cancel Spectrum Internet and the mailbox is deleted, forwarding ends too. It's a bridge, not a permanent fix.

— Bill

PART 3

AT&T, SBCGlobal & Other Provider Addresses

att.net, sbcglobal.net, ameritech.net, bellsouth.net and their cousins are all AT&T Mail now, powered by Yahoo. Plus a quick word on Xfinity, Frontier and Kinetic addresses.

CHAPTER 11

AT&T Mail: One Family, Many Names

AT&T has twelve email endings, a souvenir of all the phone companies that joined it over the years. Every one of them is "AT&T Mail" today, and they all follow the same rules.

AT&T Mail endings
att.net · currently.com · sbcglobal.net · ameritech.net · bellsouth.net · pacbell.net
swbell.net · prodigy.net · flash.net · snet.net · nvbell.net · wans.net

AT&T Mail runs on Yahoo

AT&T's mail has been run by Yahoo for years, and in 2025 the last pieces moved over: mail sent to AT&T addresses now goes straight to Yahoo's mail servers. AT&T calls the current version the **new AT&T Mail**, and it looks a lot like Yahoo Mail. Your address, your password and your old messages stay the same.

GOOD TO KNOW

worldnet.att.net is gone

The very old **worldnet.att.net** ending has stopped receiving mail. If you still had one of those, the same username at **att.net** is the place to check, or talk with AT&T.

Yahoo Mail Plus for AT&T addresses: honest cost

When you sign in you may see offers for **Yahoo Mail Plus**, a paid upgrade that removes ads and adds a few extras. AT&T's page listed it at about $5.00 a month when we checked. It's optional. Your free AT&T address works fine without it, and you don't need it to keep the address.

SCAM ALERT

Upgrades come from inside your mailbox, never from a phone call

If someone calls or emails saying you must pay to "keep" or "upgrade" your AT&T email, hang up or delete it. See Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails*.

CHAPTER 12

Signing In to AT&T Mail

Your AT&T email address is also your **AT&T ID**, the same sign-in AT&T uses for its own website. If you use the same ID for both, the password is the same on att.com and on currently.com, and changing one changes the other.

Reading your mail in a web browser

1. Open your browser and type **att.com** yourself.
2. Choose the **Mail** link, or **Sign in** and then **Mail**. AT&T also offers its mail start page at **currently.com**.
3. Enter your full email address, including the ending, then your password.
4. Your inbox opens. If AT&T asks you to confirm with a code by text or email, enter the code.

TIP

Old look or new look

AT&T has offered a **Switch back to old AT&T Yahoo Mail** option in the upper corner of the new inbox. If that's offered on your screen and the new look confuses you, it's fine to use it.

HEADS UP

A Yahoo screen is normal here

Because the mail runs on Yahoo, you may be sent to a page with Yahoo branding while you sign in. That's real, as long as you started by typing att.com or currently.com yourself.

CHAPTER 13

Forgot Your AT&T Password, or Locked Out

AT&T locks an email account for protection after too many wrong passwords, or if something looks unusual. Here's how to get back in.

If you just typed the wrong password a few times

AT&T says a lock caused by typos often clears on its own. Wait about an hour, then try again slowly.

Reset your password

1. Type **att.com** into your browser and choose **Sign in**, then **Forgot password** (AT&T calls the page **Reset your password**).
2. Enter your AT&T ID (your full email address) and the last name on the account.
3. Choose how to verify: a code by text message or by email to your recovery address.
4. Enter the code, then type and confirm a new password.
5. Update the new password on each phone, tablet and computer that reads this mail (see Chapter 14, *The Secure Mail Key, Explained* first, because some apps use a secure mail key instead of your password).

GOOD TO KNOW

Error 203.2

If you see an error that mentions **203.2**, AT&T says the account was usually locked to protect it. Reset the password as above. If you think someone else got in, also follow Chapter 24, *If Your Provider Email Was Hacked*.

HEADS UP

"Inactive" message

If AT&T says your account is inactive because it was flagged for sending spam, it's usually because someone got into it. AT&T asks you to contact them to reactivate it.

CHAPTER 14

The Secure Mail Key, Explained

If you've ever typed your correct AT&T password into a mail program and been told it's wrong, this chapter is the answer. Many mail programs need a special code called a **secure mail key** instead of your password.

What it is, in plain English

- A **secure mail key** is a 16-character code you create on AT&T's website. You type it into a mail program *instead of* your regular password.
- You only need one for mail programs that **don't** use AT&T's modern sign-in (called OAuth). Apple's Mail app on an iPhone or iPad with a reasonably recent iOS uses the modern sign-in, so it usually doesn't need a key.
- Older versions of Outlook, Thunderbird and many other programs **do** need one.
- Keys never expire, and changing your password doesn't break them. But AT&T deletes all your keys if the account is ever locked or blocked, and then you make new ones.
- You need a separate key for each AT&T email address, and AT&T suggests one per device.

How to create a secure mail key

1. Have your AT&T ID (email address) and password ready.
2. Type **att.com** into your browser, sign in, and go to your **profile**.
3. Choose **Settings** and confirm which email account you're working on.
4. Choose **Add secure mail key**.
5. Type a nickname so you'll remember what it's for, such as *Kitchen PC Outlook*, and choose **Create**.
6. Copy the key (or write it carefully), then paste it into your mail program where it asks for the password. For IMAP accounts, use it for both the incoming and the outgoing server.

> **TIP**
>
> **You won't see it again**
>
> Write the nickname in the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 33, *Your Provider Email Cheat-Sheet*, but you don't need to keep the key itself. If you ever need it again, just delete the old key and make a new one.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody needs your key but your mail program

Treat a secure mail key like a password. A real AT&T employee will never ask you to read it to them.

CHAPTER 15

AT&T Settings for Mail Apps

If your mail program asks for server settings, these are AT&T's. They work for every AT&T ending, including sbcglobal.net, bellsouth.net and ameritech.net.

Setting	What to enter
Account type	IMAP
Incoming (IMAP) server	imap.mail.att.net · port 993 · SSL on
Outgoing (SMTP) server	smtp.mail.att.net · port 465 · SSL on (AT&T also lists 587)
Username	Your full email address
Password	Your password if the app uses AT&T's modern sign-in; otherwise a secure mail key (Chapter 14, *The Secure Mail Key, Explained*)

HEADS UP

POP is the old way

AT&T still lists POP settings, but POP downloads mail to one device and can leave the others out of sync. Use IMAP unless you have a specific reason not to.

TIP

Phones usually don't need any of this

On an iPhone or Android phone, adding the account with the built-in steps in Chapter 18, *Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad* or Chapter 19, *Adding It to the Gmail App (Android or iPhone)* almost always fills these in for you.

CHAPTER 16

Keeping an AT&T Address Alive

AT&T's rules are kinder than Spectrum's in one important way: an AT&T email address can usually outlive your AT&T internet service. But it has its own use-it-or-lose-it rule.

If this happens…	Here's what AT&T says
No use for 12 months	AT&T considers the mailbox inactive and deletes the mailbox and its contents.
Signing in again within three years	Restores the account (the address), but not the old emails, files or settings.
You cancel AT&T internet	AT&T says canceling a service doesn't remove the email address; it can carry on as a free account. You can't delete the address yourself until 30 to 60 days after a paid service ends.

Keep it healthy

- Sign in at att.com or currently.com at least every few months, even if you mostly read mail on your phone.
- Keep a current cell number and recovery email on your AT&T profile before you cancel any service. Some people find resetting a password harder after their paid service ends.
- Pay any final bill. Community reports say an unpaid balance can block access to the email until it's settled.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ask before you cancel

When you call to cancel AT&T internet, say clearly: "I want to keep my email address as a free account." Ask them to note it on the account.

CHAPTER 17

Other Provider Addresses: Xfinity, Frontier and Kinetic

Spectrum and AT&T are the big ones around Portage County, but you may have family elsewhere with other provider addresses. Here's a brief, honest summary of what we could confirm.

Address	What we found
comcast.net (Xfinity)	Xfinity is moving its mailboxes to Yahoo Mail in phases through 2026; accepting Yahoo's terms keeps the address. Former Xfinity customers can keep using the address only if they signed in on the Xfinity Email website in the 90 days before disconnecting, and inactive accounts can be closed.
frontier.com	Frontier turned its webmail over to Yahoo in 2024. Frontier now points people to Yahoo for help with these accounts.
windstream.net and other Kinetic addresses	Run on Kinetic by Windstream's own mail system. Ask Kinetic about its rules before canceling service.

HEADS UP

Same advice for all of them

Whatever the company, the safe plan is the same: know your password, keep recovery details current, sign in on the website now and then, and move important accounts to an address you own *before* canceling service. See Part 6.

— Bill

PART 4

Reading Your Mail on Phones and Computers

Putting your Spectrum or AT&T address on an iPhone, an Android phone or a Windows PC, and what to do when mail stops arriving or won't send.

CHAPTER 18

Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad

The Mail app that comes with your iPhone or iPad handles Spectrum and AT&T addresses well. Once it's set up, new mail shows up on its own and you can reply with a tap.

For an AT&T, SBCGlobal, BellSouth or Ameritech address

1. Open **Settings**, tap **Apps**, then tap **Mail**.
2. Tap **Mail Accounts**, then **Add Account**.
3. Type your full email address. If Mail asks you to choose a provider, choose **Yahoo** (AT&T Mail runs on Yahoo), or choose **Other** if your screen suggests it.
4. You'll be taken to an AT&T or Yahoo sign-in page. Enter your password there and approve the connection. This is the modern sign-in, so no secure mail key is needed.
5. Choose what to sync (leave **Mail** on) and tap **Save**.

For a Spectrum, Roadrunner, Charter or Time Warner address

1. Open **Settings > Apps > Mail > Mail Accounts > Add Account**.
2. Type your full email address. If it isn't recognized, choose **Other**, then **Add Mail Account**.
3. Enter your name, full email address, Spectrum email password and a description such as *Spectrum*. Tap **Next**.
4. If Mail can't find the settings by itself, choose **IMAP** and type the servers from Chapter 9, *Spectrum Settings for Mail Apps* for both incoming and outgoing mail. The username is your full email address both times.
5. Tap **Next**, then **Save**.

TIP

See all your mail in one place

Once you have more than one account, the Mail app's **All Inboxes** shows them together. It's a gentle way to start using a new address while still seeing mail to the old one.

GOOD TO KNOW

On an older iPhone

If your iPhone runs an older iOS, the path is **Settings > Mail > Accounts > Add Account**. The steps after that are the same.

CHAPTER 19

Adding It to the Gmail App (Android or iPhone)

Most Android phones read email through the Gmail app, and it isn't only for Gmail. You can add a Spectrum or AT&T address right alongside a Gmail address.

On an Android phone

1. Open the **Gmail** app and tap your profile picture or initial at the top right.
2. Tap **Add another account**.
3. Tap **Other**. (For an AT&T address, you can choose **Yahoo** instead and sign in there.)
4. Type your full email address and tap **Next**.
5. Choose **Personal (IMAP)**, enter your password (or AT&T secure mail key, Chapter 14, *The Secure Mail Key, Explained*), and tap **Next**.
6. If asked, enter the server settings from Chapter 9, *Spectrum Settings for Mail Apps* or Chapter 15, *AT&T Settings for Mail Apps*.

On an iPhone, in the Gmail app

1. Open the Gmail app and tap your profile picture at the top right.
2. Tap **Add another account**, then **Other (IMAP)**.
3. Enter your full email address, tap **Next**, and enter the settings and password when asked.

TIP

All inboxes

In the Gmail app, tap the menu at the top left and choose **All inboxes** to see every account together.

HEADS UP

"Email security not guaranteed"

If the Gmail app warns that security isn't guaranteed, don't switch the security type to None. Double-check the port numbers instead (993 and 587 for Spectrum; 993 and 465 for AT&T), or call me.

GOOD TO KNOW

Gmail on the web no longer pulls in other mail

Gmail on a computer used to offer "Check mail from other accounts" to fetch your Spectrum or AT&T mail into Gmail. Google is retiring that feature and the related Gmailify feature in 2026. The Gmail *app* on your phone keeps working with other accounts, as shown above.

CHAPTER 20

Adding It to Outlook on a Windows PC

Many Windows computers come with Outlook. Both the new Outlook and classic Outlook can show a Spectrum or AT&T address next to your other mail.

In the new Outlook for Windows

1. Open Outlook. Choose **Add account** at the bottom of your list of folders, or go to **Settings > Accounts** and choose **Add account**.
2. Type your full email address and choose **Continue**.
3. Follow the prompts. For AT&T, if Outlook asks for a password and your normal password is refused, use a secure mail key from Chapter 14, *The Secure Mail Key, Explained*. For Spectrum, use your Spectrum email password.
4. If Outlook asks for server settings, choose **IMAP** and use the settings from Chapter 9, *Spectrum Settings for Mail Apps* or Chapter 15, *AT&T Settings for Mail Apps*.

In classic Outlook

1. Choose **File > Add Account**.
2. Type your email address, choose **Advanced options**, and check **Let me set up my account manually**.
3. Choose **IMAP**, then enter the servers and ports from your company's settings chapter.
4. Enter the password (or AT&T secure mail key) and choose **Connect**.

> TIP
>
> **Outlook is also where moving old mail is easiest**
>
> With both your old and new addresses in Outlook on a computer, you can drag whole folders from one account to the other. See Chapter 27, *Bringing Your Old Mail and Contacts Along*.

CHAPTER 21

When Mail Stops Arriving or Won't Send

Provider email tends to work for years and then suddenly stop on one device. Usually the cause is simple. Work down this list in order.

What you see	What to try
"Password incorrect" on one device	The password changed somewhere else. Update it on that device. For AT&T in an older program, you may need a secure mail key (Chapter 14, *The Secure Mail Key, Explained*).
Mail stops on every device	Sign in on the company's website. If you can't, reset the password (Chapter 6, *Forgot Your Spectrum Email Password* or Chapter 13, *Forgot Your AT&T Password, or Locked Out*). A Spectrum mailbox may be locked for inactivity (Chapter 7, *Spectrum's Use-It-or-Lose-It Rules*).
You can receive but not send	Check the outgoing (SMTP) server and port. Spectrum uses 587; AT&T uses 465. Make sure "authentication" or "my outgoing server requires sign-in" is on.
People say your mail went to their spam	That can happen with older provider domains. Ask them to add your address to their contacts.
Messages with photos won't send	The message may be too large. Spectrum's limit is about 30 MB. Share big photos and videos by link instead.
A new phone won't connect	Re-add the account from scratch using Chapter 18, *Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad* or Chapter 19, *Adding It to the Gmail App (Android or iPhone)*.

The two-minute reset

1. Turn the phone or computer off and back on.
2. Sign in to the company's website in a browser. If that works, the account itself is fine.
3. On the device, remove the account and add it again. Your mail is stored on the company's servers with IMAP, so removing the account from a device doesn't delete your mail.

HEADS UP

One exception: POP accounts

If your account was set up years ago as **POP** on a computer, some old mail may exist *only* on that computer. Don't remove a POP account from a computer until you've checked. Call me if you're unsure.

SCAM ALERT

Never pay a stranger to fix email

Search results for "Roadrunner email support" or "AT&T email help" are full of paid ads for look-alike support companies. See Chapter 23, *Fake Email Support Phone Numbers*.

PART 5

Scams and Hacked Accounts

Old provider addresses are favorite targets for scammers. Here's how to spot the fakes and what to do if someone gets in.

CHAPTER 22

The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails

This is the most common scam aimed at Spectrum, Roadrunner and AT&T addresses. Because people know these companies really have been changing their email systems, the fakes sound believable.

What the fakes look like

- "Your mailbox is full. Click here to upgrade your storage or new mail will be rejected."
- "Your Roadrunner account will be closed in 24 hours. Verify now."
- "We are upgrading to a new email platform. Sign in to migrate your mailbox."
- "Unusual sign-in. Confirm your password to keep your account."
- A "modem upgrade" or "equipment fee" email asking for an immediate payment.

Red flags

- A deadline in hours, and a threat to delete or close something.
- A button or link that takes you to a sign-in page.
- An attachment. Spectrum says it never sends messages with attachments.
- A sender address that doesn't match the company. Spectrum Community staff have flagged fake "Unified Messaging Platform" emails from domains Spectrum doesn't use.

STAY SAFE

The one rule that beats every one of these

Never sign in from a link in an email. If a message worries you, close it, open your browser, and type **spectrum.net** or **att.com** yourself. If there's really a problem, you'll see it there.

How to report it

If you got…	Do this
Fake Spectrum email	Forward the whole message to **phishing@charter.net**, then delete it.
Fake AT&T email	Forward it to **abuse@att.net**, then delete it.
Fake text message	Forward it to **7726** (it spells SPAM), then delete it.

SCAM ALERT

Already clicked and typed your password?

Don't be embarrassed; these are well made. Change your password right away from the real website, then follow Chapter 24, *If Your Provider Email Was Hacked*.

CHAPTER 23

Fake Email Support Phone Numbers

When email stops working, the natural thing is to search "Roadrunner email support phone number." The top results are often paid ads or pages run by companies that have nothing to do with Spectrum or AT&T. They may ask for remote access to your computer and charge hundreds of dollars, or worse.

How to reach the real company

- Use the phone number printed on your Spectrum or AT&T bill.
- Or type **spectrum.net** or **att.com** yourself and use the Contact or Support links there.
- Spectrum staff advise never using a phone number given to you in a suspicious message.

SCAM ALERT

Warning signs on the phone

Asking you to install a remote-control program, asking for payment by gift card, wire or crypto, or claiming your email was "used by hackers" and needs a paid security plan. Hang up.

TIP

Write the real numbers down now

Copy the support numbers from your bill into the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 33, *Your Provider Email Cheat-Sheet* today, while nothing is wrong.

FROM BILL

When it's me you want

If you'd rather have someone you know look at it, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I'll never ask for a gift card, and I'll tell you the price before we start.

CHAPTER 24

If Your Provider Email Was Hacked

Signs of a hacked account include friends getting strange emails "from you," a password that suddenly stops working, or messages you didn't send in your Sent folder. Take a breath; it's fixable.

1. From a computer or phone you trust, type **spectrum.net** or **att.com** yourself and reset your password (Chapter 6, *Forgot Your Spectrum Email Password* or Chapter 13, *Forgot Your AT&T Password, or Locked Out*). Use a new password you've never used anywhere else.
2. Check your recovery phone number and recovery email. Remove any you don't recognize.
3. In your mail settings, look for forwarding rules or filters you didn't create, and delete them. AT&T specifically suggests checking for unknown forwarding or POP connections.
4. For AT&T, make new secure mail keys for your mail programs (old ones are deleted when an account is locked).
5. Change the password on any other account that used the same password, starting with your bank.
6. Send a short note to your contacts: "My email was hacked. Please ignore any odd messages from me last week."

HEADS UP

If you can't get back in

If a hacker changed the password and recovery details, call your internet company using the number on your bill. They'll verify you as the account holder.

STAY SAFE

Watch for follow-up scams

After a hack, people sometimes get calls offering to "recover" the account for a fee. Your internet company doesn't charge to help you back into your own email.

— Bill

PART 6

Moving Off Safely

Whether you're switching internet companies or just want an address you own, here's how to move without losing mail, contacts or access to the accounts that matter.

CHAPTER 25

Should You Move? An Honest Look

You don't *have* to give up a provider address. Lots of people keep theirs happily for years. But it's worth weighing honestly, because the decision is much easier on a calm day than in a rush after the cable is already canceled.

Side	Things to weigh
Reasons to stay	Everyone knows the address. It works today. You plan to keep the same internet company. AT&T addresses can usually survive canceling AT&T internet.
Reasons to move	You might switch internet companies someday (fiber, a move, a better price). Spectrum mailboxes can be deleted when service ends. Provider mailboxes are smaller. The company sets the rules.

A good middle path

Many people do this: keep the old address for now, but open a free address they own (Gmail, Outlook.com or iCloud Mail), and slowly move the important accounts over. If the old address ever disappears, nothing important goes with it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a move does for you

Your email stops depending on which internet company serves your house. You can switch providers, move to a new home or downsize without changing your address again.

HEADS UP

Don't rush because of a scary email

If you're deciding to move because an email said your account is closing, check Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails* first. Make the decision on your own schedule.

CHAPTER 26

Choosing and Setting Up a New Address

A new address that belongs to you, not to your internet company, is the foundation of a safe move. All three of the big choices below are free to start.

Option	What to know
Gmail (Google)	Up to 15 GB of free storage shared with Google Photos and Drive. Google has tested starting some brand-new accounts at 5 GB until a phone number is added. Works on any phone or computer.
Outlook.com (Microsoft)	15 GB of free mailbox storage. A good fit if you use Outlook on a Windows PC.
iCloud Mail (Apple)	Comes with an Apple Account; a natural fit for iPhone and Mac households. Free iCloud storage is 5 GB, shared with photos and backups.

Tips for picking the name

- Use your name in a simple form people can spell over the phone, such as *mary.jones.ohio*.
- Avoid birth years and house numbers; they help scammers.
- Say it out loud once. If you'd have to spell it twice, try something simpler.

Before you use it for anything

1. Set a strong password you've never used anywhere else, and write it down at home.
2. Add your cell phone number for recovery.
3. Turn on two-step verification. Our Gmail and Outlook guides walk through it.
4. Add the new account to your phone next to the old one, so you can see both. See Chapter 18, *Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad* or Chapter 19, *Adding It to the Gmail App (Android or iPhone)*.

TIP

Avoid another provider address

If you're switching to a new internet company, don't take *their* free email address. You'd just be setting up the same problem again.

CHAPTER 27

Bringing Your Old Mail and Contacts Along

You probably have years of messages and a long list of contacts in your old address. Here's how to bring along what matters. You don't have to move everything; most people only care about a few folders.

Contacts first

1. In your old account's web mail, open **Contacts** and look for an **Export** option. Save the file to your computer.
2. In your new account (Gmail, Outlook.com or iCloud), open Contacts and choose **Import**. Pick the file you saved.
3. If your contacts already live on your iPhone or Android phone, they may be stored in your Apple or Google account rather than in the old email. Check before you worry.

Old mail: the drag-and-drop way

1. On a computer, set up both the old and the new address in the same mail program, such as Outlook or Apple Mail, both as IMAP (see Chapter 20, *Adding It to Outlook on a Windows PC*).
2. In the new account, create a folder called *Old Spectrum Mail* or *Old AT&T Mail*.
3. Open a folder in the old account, select the messages you want to keep, and drag them into the new folder.
4. Wait for the copy to finish before closing the program. Large folders can take a while.

TIP

Save the few that really matter

For a handful of important messages, such as a letter from a family member or a receipt, you can also simply forward them to your new address, or print them to PDF.

HEADS UP

Don't count on Gmail's old import trick

Gmail on the web is retiring its "Check mail from other accounts" feature in 2026, so it's no longer a reliable way to pull old mail across. Use the drag-and-drop way above, or call me.

STAY SAFE

Deleted emails?

If you deleted emails by mistake during a move, check the old account's **Trash** folder right away. Spectrum and AT&T empty the trash on their own schedule, and once it's emptied, the mail is gone.

CHAPTER 28

Updating Your Accounts: The Important-Accounts List

This is the heart of a safe move. Before your old address could ever disappear, every account that sends password resets or important notices there needs to know your new address.

Start with these

Priority	Accounts to update	Why
1	Bank, credit cards, investment accounts	Fraud alerts and password resets
2	Apple Account, Google account, Microsoft account	They control your phone, photos and passwords
3	Medicare, Social Security, pharmacy, patient portals	Health notices and refills
4	Utilities, insurance, phone company	Bills and outage notices
5	Amazon and other shopping, Facebook, streaming	Orders and sign-in codes
6	Church, clubs, family and friends	So nobody's message gets lost

How to update one account

1. Type the company's website yourself and sign in.
2. Look for **Profile**, **Account**, **Settings** or **Contact information**.
3. Change the email address to the new one. Many sites send a confirmation code to the new address; enter it.
4. Put a check mark next to that account on your list.

> **TIP**
>
> **Let the old inbox tell you what's left**
>
> For a few months, every time a company emails your old address, update that company. Over time the old inbox goes quiet on its own.

SCAM ALERT

Update by typing the website yourself

Scammers send fake "update your email address" messages too. Make each change by going to the company's website on your own, not from a link.

CHAPTER 29

Telling People and Keeping the Old Address Alive

Once your important accounts are moved, it's time to tell people. Keeping the old address working for a while longer is a safety net.

Telling family and friends

1. From your **new** address, send one short message to your contacts: "My new email is … Please update your address book. My old one will stop working eventually."
2. Put the new address in your old account's signature for a few months, if your mail program allows it.
3. Tell your church office and clubs directly. Group mailing lists often need you to sign up again.

Keeping the old address alive

- Keep signing in on the old company's website every couple of months (see Chapter 7, *Spectrum's Use-It-or-Lose-It Rules* and Chapter 16, *Keeping an AT&T Address Alive*).
- Keep the old account in your phone's mail app so you'll notice stragglers.
- For AT&T addresses, you can usually keep the address as a free account even after canceling service.
- For Spectrum addresses, assume the mailbox ends when your Spectrum Internet service ends.

HEADS UP

Don't delete the old address too soon

Wait at least six months to a year after moving before you delete an old address you control. Some accounts only email once a year, such as tax documents or insurance renewals.

CHAPTER 30

Canceling or Switching Internet: The Order of Operations

If you're switching internet companies, this is the chapter to read before you make the call. The order matters, because once a Spectrum account is canceled, the email may go with it.

The safe order

1. **Weeks before:** open your new address (Chapter 26, *Choosing and Setting Up a New Address*) and add it to your phone.
2. **Weeks before:** update your important accounts to the new address (Chapter 28, *Updating Your Accounts: The Important-Accounts List*).
3. **Weeks before:** save the old mail and contacts you want to keep (Chapter 27, *Bringing Your Old Mail and Contacts Along*).
4. **Before you cancel:** tell family and friends (Chapter 29, *Telling People and Keeping the Old Address Alive*).
5. **When you call to cancel:** for AT&T, say you want to keep your email address as a free account and ask that it be noted. For Spectrum, ask what will happen to your email and when, and write down the answer and the representative's name.
6. **After you cancel:** keep checking the old address for as long as it works. For AT&T, keep signing in at least every few months.

STAY SAFE

Canceled Spectrum and lost your email already?

Call Spectrum right away using the number on your old bill and ask whether the mailbox can still be reached. Spectrum's help pages say content deleted after service ends can't be recovered, so time matters. Then start with Chapter 28, *Updating Your Accounts: The Important-Accounts List* for your important accounts.

GOOD TO KNOW

Switching to a new provider's email isn't the answer

The new company may offer you a free address. Politely decline and use one you own instead, so you never have to do this again.

— Bill

PART 7

Getting Help

Helping a parent, when to call me, and a one-page cheat-sheet.

CHAPTER 31

Helping a Parent with an Old Provider Address

Grown children often discover a parent's whole life runs through an sbcglobal.net or rr.com address, and that nobody knows the password. Here's a gentle, respectful way to help.

1. Sit down together and ask permission before you change anything. It's their address and their mail.
2. Do the safety check in Chapter 4, *Your Half-Hour Safety Check* together: password, recovery phone, recovery email.
3. Add yourself as the recovery email if your parent is comfortable with that.
4. Write the password and the company's real support number on the "Keep this handy" table and keep it in a safe place at their home.
5. If they're switching internet service, do Chapter 30, *Canceling or Switching Internet: The Order of Operations* together before anyone calls to cancel.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this helps everyone

A parent who knows their own password and has a recovery phone set up is much harder to scam and much easier to help from a distance.

SCAM ALERT

Talk about the "mailbox full" scam

Show your parent an example from Chapter 22, *The Fake "Mailbox Full" and "Account Closing" Emails*. Agree on a simple family rule: "If an email says your account is closing, call me before you click anything."

CHAPTER 32

When to Call Bill

Plenty of email problems are quick fixes. These are the ones where a second pair of hands really helps.

Good reasons to call

- You're switching internet companies and want your email moved safely first.
- Your Spectrum or AT&T mail stopped working on a phone or computer and the steps here didn't fix it.
- You need years of old mail and contacts copied to a new address.
- You think you clicked a fake "mailbox full" email, or your account was hacked.
- A parent's whole digital life runs through an old address and nobody knows the password.
- Old mail exists only in a POP account on one computer and you don't want to lose it.

This guide pairs with my **Digital Safety Check-Up**, where we go through your email, passwords and recovery details together and make sure nothing important depends on an address that could disappear.

SCAM ALERT

A reminder

Spectrum, AT&T and I will never ask you to pay with a gift card, and no real support line will cold-call you about your email.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book online at **billshometech.com/book**. Bill's Home Tech serves **Portage County, Ohio**, and I bring 30+ years of professional experience to every visit. If you reach my assistant **Sophie** on the main line, she can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule. My help is $49 remote · $99 in your home. The guides themselves are free to read.

— Bill

CHAPTER 33

Your Provider Email Cheat-Sheet

Most-used steps

I want to…	Do this
Read Spectrum mail on the web	Type spectrum.net, Sign In, choose Email (Chapter 5, *Signing In to Spectrum Email*)
Read AT&T mail on the web	Type att.com or currently.com, choose Mail (Chapter 12, *Signing In to AT&T Mail*)
Reset a Spectrum password	spectrum.net, Sign In, Forgot Username or Password? (Chapter 6, *Forgot Your Spectrum Email Password*)
Reset an AT&T password	att.com, Sign in, Forgot password (Chapter 13, *Forgot Your AT&T Password, or Locked Out*)
Make an AT&T secure mail key	att.com profile, Settings, Add secure mail key (Chapter 14, *The Secure Mail Key, Explained*)
Add email to an iPhone	Settings > Apps > Mail > Mail Accounts > Add Account (Chapter 18, *Adding Provider Email to an iPhone or iPad*)

Server settings at a glance

Company	Incoming (IMAP)	Outgoing (SMTP)
Spectrum (rr.com, twc.com)	mail.twc.com · 993 · SSL	mail.twc.com · 587
Spectrum (charter.net)	mobile.charter.net · 993 · SSL	mobile.charter.net · 587
AT&T (all endings)	imap.mail.att.net · 993 · SSL	smtp.mail.att.net · 465 · SSL

Five safety rules

1. Never sign in from a link in an email. Type the website yourself.
2. "Mailbox full" and "account closing" emails are almost always scams.
3. Only call support numbers printed on your bill.
4. Sign in on the company's website every few months.
5. Move important accounts to an address you own *before* canceling internet service.

Keep this handy

Item	Fill in
My provider email address	_____

Item	Fill in
Company in charge (Spectrum / AT&T / other)	_____
Support number from my bill	_____
Recovery phone on file	_____
Recovery email on file	_____
Secure mail key nicknames (AT&T)	_____
My new address (if moving)	_____

FROM BILL

One last thing

Your old address has carried a lot of life over the years. Treat it kindly, keep its password handy, and give it a safe retirement plan. If you ever want help with any of it, I'm a phone call away.

— Bill