

## **Consumer Checklist for May 24 Cell Phone ‘Independence Day’** What You Should Know About Transferring Your Cell Phone Number

May 24 is “independence day” for the rest of the country. Cell phone customers outside the top 100 metropolitan areas will be able to take their current cell phone number with them when switching companies. Some also will be able to transfer their home phone number to their cell phone.

Number transfers were implemented in the top 100 markets last November 24. More than 2.6 million consumers have already taken advantage of number transfers—giving them greater freedom to shop around for lower prices and better service.

For the first several months, number transfers were plagued with well-publicized glitches and delays. Today most number transfers in the larger markets appear to be going smoothly. However, consumers outside the top 100 markets may still experience delays because many smaller companies are not expected to use fully automated number transfer procedures.

Consumers in the smaller markets should not expect to be able to transfer their home landline phone number to their cell phone immediately. Many rural and small telephone companies have sought waivers from the landline to wireless number transfers. That means consumers in some parts of the country will have to wait 6-12 months or more for the right to transfer home telephone numbers to their cell phone.

Tips for transferring your cell phone number for consumers outside the top 100 markets:

- **Expect to wait.** Expect the transfer to take several days, at best, unless your new cell phone company can assure you the process is fully automated.
- **Don’t cancel first.** Don’t cancel your service before you initiate the switch — that will happen when your new carrier requests the number transfer. If you are still under contract, you’ll have to pay a contract termination charge.
- **It might cost you.** Consumers should remember that if they change service before their contract ends, they likely will pay a termination fee. They should also keep in mind that while they get to keep their cell phone number, they might not be able to keep their cell phone, so consider the cost of a new phone before switching.
- **Give the new cell phone company complete and accurate information.** Take your last bill with you to the new cell phone company. Your account number and exact billing name and address are necessary for a smooth transfer.
- **Home phone numbers may not be movable.** Don’t expect that you can move your home number to your cell phone in markets outside the top 100. Check with your local phone company first.

For CU’s general cell-phone service shopping tips [click here](#).