



# Kathleen Q. Abernathy

FCC Commissioner

## *FOCUS ON CONSUMER CONCERNS*

### **LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY**

An increasing number of consumers depend on a single telephone number for business, personal, and safety reasons. Thanks to recent action by the Federal Communications Commission, consumers will now have the freedom to change wireless and / or wireline service providers without having to give up their current telephone numbers.

#### **WHAT IS WIRELESS LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY?**

Wireless Local Number Portability (LNP) is a government mandate allowing, where technically feasible, consumers to switch from one wireless carrier to another, from a wireline carrier to a wireless carrier, or from a wireless carrier to a wireline carrier, while retaining the same telephone number. Number portability between wireline carriers is already available.

#### **HOW DO I SWITCH MY WIRELESS NUMBER FROM MY CURRENT PROVIDER TO A DIFFERENT WIRELESS PROVIDER?**

Before beginning the porting process, you should first review your current wireless service contract to determine if you will incur an early termination fee for canceling your existing service.

If you decide to switch wireless providers, and keep your current number, it is first necessary to contact the prospective new carrier. The new carrier will then start the porting process by contacting your current carrier. To complete this process, the new carrier will need to know certain information about your existing wireless account. For your convenience you should either have a copy of one of your current wireless bills with you, or know the details of your account.

You should *not* contact your current wireless provider first and cancel or deactivate your wireless service because this may prevent you from being able to keep your current number. Only activated wireless numbers can be ported.

#### **WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS CONCERNING MY CURRENT WIRELESS PROVIDER?**

Where technically feasible, wireless carriers may not refuse to port your phone number, and are required to port a number after receiving a valid request. However, you are still legally bound by any existing service agreements and may incur fees for canceling an existing contract prematurely. Read your existing contract, or contact your current provider, to find out about any potential penalties for early termination.

## **WHEN IS A PORT NOT TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE?**

At this time, porting your number from a wireless to a wireline carrier is technically possible only in limited circumstances. For example, if your cell phone number is associated with a different geographic area than your wireline number, it is unlikely that the wireless-to-wireline port could occur at this time. Because of this technical limitation, you should inquire with the prospective wireline carrier about whether you can port your wireless number to a wireline connection.

Wireline to wireless porting can occur when your wireline phone is located in a geographic area that both the wireless and wireline carrier serve. Again, you should check with the prospective carrier to determine if the port is technically feasible.

## **WHEN WILL WIRELESS NUMBER PORTABILITY BE AVAILABLE?**

It will be available in the top 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas starting **November 24, 2003**. Wireless carriers outside the top 100 MSAs must be capable of porting numbers within six months after receiving a request, or by **May 24, 2004**, whichever is later.

To determine if you live in one of the Top 100 MSAs please visit the Top 100 MSAs list available at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/wlnp/documents/top100.pdf>.

## **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO PORT MY NUMBER?**

The length of time for porting your number depends on the type of port you request. If you are porting from one wireless carrier to another wireless carrier, the average port should take two and a half hours. However, in some cases this may take longer, particularly the first few days the process is in place.

If you are porting your number from a wireline to wireless carrier or from a wireless to a wireline carrier, the port may take up to four business days.

## **CAN I KEEP MY CURRENT WIRELESS PHONE WHEN I SWITCH WIRELESS PROVIDERS?**

Depending on your current service provider's network and your type of wireless phone, you may be able to keep your existing phone. You will need to check with your new service provider to determine if a new phone must be purchased.

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"Focus on Consumer Concerns" is a regular feature of Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy's website. If you have suggestions on how our office can serve you better, please feel free to contact us at (202) 418-2400 or [kabernat@fcc.gov](mailto:kabernat@fcc.gov).