

Number crunching: how much does a phone call really cost?

0800, 0870, 090, 020... There are so many different phone numbers that keeping tabs on how much they cost to call can be confusing. So what do they all mean?

This is a handy guide to common phone numbers, some of the ways that they are used and the indicative costs of calling them from landlines or mobile phones.

The prices below are indicative only and should not be used as a definitive list of call charges. Actual costs depend on your communication provider and a number of factors such as individual calling plans, time of day and the exact number called. You should check with your provider before you dial.

As well as a pence per minute rate, most fixed line providers charge a call set-up fee to connect calls, which is typically between 3p and 15p.

01 and 02 numbers – geographic numbers



These numbers relate to specific locations in the UK and are used for homes and businesses. For example, Huddersfield is 01484, Bath is 01225, Edinburgh is 0131 and London is 020.

How much do calls cost? Calls from landlines are typically charged between 2p and 10p per minute; calls from mobiles between 10p and 40p per minute. For landlines there is normally also a call set-up fee, and call charges are dependent on the time of day. Most providers offer call packages that allow calls free of charge at certain times of the day.

03 numbers – UK-wide geographic numbers



Many organisations use 03 numbers as an alternative to more expensive 08 numbers.

How much do calls cost? Calls cost no more than calls to geographic numbers (01 or 02) and must be included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Calls from landlines are typically charged between 2p and 10p per minute; calls from mobiles typically cost between 10p and 40p per minute. Calls from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages.

030 numbers – not-for-profit organisations



030 numbers were specially designed for not-for-profit organisations, charities and public bodies to offer consumers a single point of contact nationally. The BBC, the Met Police, the RSPCA, Oxfam, Relate, some local councils, Ofcom and a number of government departments use 030 numbers.

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07 – mobile numbers



How much do calls cost? Calls to mobiles are charged between 5p and 12p per minute from BT landlines and other landline providers and are typically not included in free call packages. Call costs from mobiles vary according to the calling plan chosen. Typically they cost between 8p and 40p per minute. Calls between mobile phones are normally included in free call packages.

070 – personal numbers



These are different from mobile numbers and calls to them are more expensive. They can be used as a “follow me” service where calls are diverted from another number. Small businesses and sole traders use them to make it easy to manage calls.

Personal numbers are also sold on a one-off basis, for example when someone is buying or selling a used car and doesn’t want to advertise their private mobile or fixed line number on a website or magazine.

How much do calls cost? 070 numbers can cost between 5p and 50p per minute if calling from a landline (and often include a call set-up fee, sometimes of up to 50p). From a mobile phone these numbers can cost up to £1.00 per minute.

08 numbers

0800 and 0808 Freephone



A number of businesses and organisations use Freephone numbers, including some helplines and charities such as RNID or Age UK, as well as Government services such as Jobseeker’s Allowance.

How much do calls cost? Calls are normally free of charge from landlines but charges may apply from mobile phones. However, the operator must make an announcement before the call is connected telling the caller that they will be charged (the announcement does not state the exact charge). Calls from mobiles typically cost up to 31p per minute.

0500 numbers cost similar amounts as 0800 and 0808 numbers from a mobile.

Chargeable 08 Business Rate numbers



These are used by large and small businesses for sales, enquiry and customer service lines and for some pay-as-you go internet access services.

0843 and 0844

How much do calls cost? Calls are charged between 1p and 13p per minute for landline customers. Calls from mobile phones are typically charged between 15p and 41p per minute, depending on the provider and the number called.

0845

How much do calls cost? Calls are typically charged at between 1p and 10.5p per minute depending on the time of day for landline customers, and often include a call set-up fee. Calls from mobile phones generally cost between 12p and 41p per minute.

0870

How much do calls cost? Calls from some fixed networks cost no more than a geographic rate call (01 or 02, between 2p and 10p plus a call set-up fee in some cases) and may count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way. Calls from other fixed networks typically cost up to 10p per minute. From some mobile networks calls typically cost between 12p and 41p per minute.

Recently some other providers have also included calls to 0845 and 0870 numbers in call packages, making them free at certain times of the day.

0871/2/3



How much do calls cost? Calls typically cost between 5p and 12.5p per minute for landline customers, plus a call set-up fee. From a mobile phone, calls may cost between 25p and 41p per minute. Services provided on these numbers are regulated by PhonepayPlus* to provide additional protection for callers. You can find out more information at www.phonepayplus.org.uk.

118 directory enquiry numbers

How much do calls cost? Calls to directory enquiry numbers (starting 118) can vary significantly in price depending on the directory enquiry service and the phone company you call from. From a landline, calls can cost a fixed one-off charge of up to £2.50 for one or sometimes more searches, plus up to £3 per minute.

From a mobile, some networks charge a fixed one-off charge of up to £2.55, plus up to £2.55 per minute. Other networks charge on a per minute basis with calls costing around £1.50 to £4.50 per minute.

Premium rate numbers

09 numbers



09 numbers are mainly used for competitions, TV voting, horoscopes, chat lines, adult lines, recorded information and professional advice services.

You can bar these premium rate numbers from being dialled from your phone, as you can with other numbers. These numbers are also regulated by PhonepayPlus*.

How much do calls cost? Calls typically cost between 10p and £1.53 per minute or per call from a BT landline, but other landline providers can charge up to £2.60 per minute. From a mobile phone charges typically range between 50p and £2.55 per minute or per call.

**PhonepayPlus (previously known as ICSTIS) regulates phone-paid services in the UK. These are the premium rate goods and services that you can buy by charging the cost to your phone bill and pre-pay account. You can find out more information at www.phonepayplus.org.uk*

Prices correct as at 18/07/2012