



CELLULAR PHONE UNLOCKING FAQ

What does it mean to unlock your cellphone?

Cell phone service works so that the unique serial number in your phone is used by the cell phone service carriers to identify who you are. With a quick database lookup it knows that a particular phone's serial number is your phone and knows how and where to transmit the signal to your device whenever a caller dials your phone number. When a wireless network carrier (carrier) 'locks' its phones, it means that its phones have been programmed to only work with SIMs issued by their company. Unlocking reverses the programming put on your phone by the network so it can work with any SIM card on any compatible GSM network around the world.

What is a GSM, CDMA and SIM?

GSM stands for Global System for Mobile Communications and is the network operating system that digital mobile phones run on. The more common type of digital mobile phone service in Bermuda is GSM, but a carrier may use CDMA.

CDMA stands for Code Division Multiplier Access and is another platform that cell phones use. In the US is CDMA is common, but just about every other country in the world uses primarily or only GSM. Unfortunately, these two different networks are not compatible with each other. As well, CDMA phones can only be purchased from particular carriers and cannot be unlocked for use with other GSM networks.

A SIM Card is a Subscriber Identification Module (**SIM**) that is an integrated circuit which securely stores the international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI). The SIM card contains your subscriber profile, which includes details about your subscribed services and features.

Why would I want to unlock my cellphone?

Once unlocked any GSM phone can work with any SIM. You can put any compatible SIM Card into your GSM phone. What this means is that you can use the same cell phone with different SIM Cards from different networks around the world. Therefore, if you have already purchased a cellphone that you like and have learned how to use it, if you change from one GSM wireless carrier to another compatible GSM carrier, you will not have to change phones. You can keep the phone you have grown to love, and all you need to do is replace the first network's SIM with your new service carrier's SIM Card.

How do I know if I have a GSM or CDMA cellphone or not?

Check your cellphone manufacturer website or the user manual that came with your cellphone or ask your carrier.

How do I unlock my cellphone?

Simply take your locked cellphone to the carrier that you bought it from and make a request for it to be unlocked.



What if I bought my Cellphone from overseas?

Bermuda's cellphone service providers are not obliged to unlock Cellphones that have been purchased from a source other than a carrier in Bermuda a.

How much does it cost to unlock my Cellphone?

Customers and former customers are entitled to have their Cellphone unlocked free of charge. The carrier doing the unlocking shall bear full responsibility with the unlocking process.

How long will it take to unlock my cellphone?

Carriers will unlock eligible cell phones within one business day after receiving a request.

What if the Carrier takes a longer period of time or says my cellphone cannot be unlocked?

If the device cannot be unlocked, the Carrier is required to provide an explanation as to why the device does not qualify for unlocking, or why additional time is needed to process the request before the end of the one day period.

Can a carrier refuse to unlock my cellphone?

Carriers can decline an unlock request if they believe it is a fraudulent request or that the device in question is stolen or if the customer is not current on its outstanding bills for services (provided there is no legitimate dispute concerning those services) or some other good reason. If the carrier refuses an unlock request, it is required by law to give an explanation as to why the request has been refused.

How will I know if my phone is unlocked or not?

If you have requested an unlock from a carrier, first check with them to ensure the process has been completed after one business day. Your carrier should be able to give you confirmation that your cellphone is unlocked at the end of the unlocking process.

If you have not made a request and want to find out if your phone is unlocked before doing so, simply attempt to insert a SIM connected with a different wireless carrier and see if it works in your phone or not. If it works, and your phone thinks it is his (or her) phone with that phone's number, then your phone is already unlocked. But if it creates some sort of error message and doesn't work, then your phone is locked.

Can any cell phone be unlocked and used on another carrier's network?

As long as the carrier you are changing to uses the same underlying network technology and the same radio frequencies. This works best for people who have GSM devices. GSM is a network standard that is used around the world.

Will my phone function normally after unlocking?

Your phone should function normally. The only difference is, you will be able to use it on other networks.



Will my phone be unlocked permanently?

Yes. There will be no need to unlock your phone again if you change SIM cards.

I've unlocked my phone, but when I turn it on, it still shows the name of the previous wireless service

This logo (called a 'splash screen') has been programmed into your phone by the company that sold it to you. It is not an indication of the company that now provides your phone service. Unlocking your phone removes the electronic restriction that prevents your phone from working with other SIMs from other wireless services. It does not change your splash screen. The good news is you can get rid of the splash screen without needing to unlock your phone. See if you can find in your phone's manual how to change the splash screen, or consider calling the phone manufacturer and have them walk you through it.

Which countries will my unlocked phone work in?

GSM service is offered in 207 countries. If you are unsure whether your phone will work in the Country you are interested in, check the website of the provider(s) you plan on receiving service from to confirm the use of GSM technology.

Who can I contact if I have problems unlocking my cellphone?

If things don't go smoothly; contact your new carrier to try to resolve the problem. If that does not work and you have no resolution after 5 days, contact the Regulatory Authority at lnp@rab.bm. For more information or register a complaint, you can visit our website at www.rab.bm.

