

Cell phone checklist

Activity sheet 9-6

Step 1 - Cell phone basics

What geographic areas will you be using the phone in?

Does the service provider provide coverage in those areas?

What are the add-on fees?

System access fees?

911 access fee?

Step 2 - Minutes and data**Minutes**

How many minutes will you use each month?

Time of use

Weekdays (for instance, Monday - Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

How many minutes?

Weekday evenings (for instance, Monday - Friday 6 p.m. to 7 a.m.)

How many minutes?

Weekends

How many minutes?

Total minutes per month:

Data

Do you want texts?

How many?

Outgoing?

Incoming?

Would it be better to pay a flat fee for unlimited text messaging?

Do you want to send and receive email?

Do you want to use the Internet from your cell?

Cell phone checklist

Activity sheet 9-6 (continued)

Step 3 - Features**Long distance**

Will you use the cell phone for long distance?

How many minutes?

Roaming

Will you use your cell phone when you travel?

How often are you out of your coverage area?

Do you think you will need:

Caller ID or call display?

Voicemail?

Call waiting?

Applications or games?

Other features?

Step 4 - The cell phone**Battery life** - How many hours will the battery last before it needs to be recharged? How often will it need to be replaced?**Durability** - Is the phone fragile or can it handle wear and tear?**Keypad** - Is it easy to use?**Screen** - Is it easy to see?**Size** - How big is the phone? How heavy is it?**Other** - Are there other things that are important to you in a cell phone?

Cell phone checklist

Activity sheet 9-6 (continued)

Step 5 - Prepaid cards or contract?**Prepaid cards****Advantages**

- Can pay in advance, no unexpected charges
- No long-term commitments
- Can stop using phone without fees or charges
- Convenience; can buy cards at many stores without a credit card

Drawbacks

- Higher costs per minute than contracts
- Minutes expire after 30 days
- Have to buy new minutes before expiry date or you lose minutes you paid for
- Have to keep track of minutes so you don't run out

Contracts**Advantages**

- Can check bill to review use
- Can get reduced price on cell phone
- Can choose a plan that best suits you
- May be able to bundle with other services to get discounts

Drawbacks

- Contract is long-term, there are penalties for breaking them
- Contract means on-going financial expense
- Can't update cell phone frequently
- If you use more minutes than the plan allows, there can be costly charges.

Step 6 - Your cell phone bill

Are you using your minutes as you expected?

Are your long distance charges high?

Are you sending and receiving text messages as much as you expected?

Would you be better off with a prepaid card or different service provider when your contract ends?