

CELL PHONES

Cell phones come with either prepaid or contract plans. There are benefits to both, so choose the one that best fits your needs.

Prepaid plans

There are two types of prepaid plans:

1) Pay a set fee per month for unlimited talk, text messages, and data. If you talk, text, or use data a lot each month, this may be one of the cheapest types of plans. AT&T Go Phone, Boost Mobile, Virgin Mobile, MetroPCS, and T-Mobile offer this type of plan. You can check their websites for the most up-to-date prices.

2) Purchase a set number of minutes of talk, text, and data. When you use all of those minutes, you have to buy more minutes. This type of prepaid plan is generally cheapest if you do not talk a lot each month. Tracfone, Net10, Straight Talk are examples. The least expensive of all the prepaid phones out there is the Tracfone.

- *Pros:* Flexibility because there is no contract and no cancellation fees. No credit check required, so you do not have to pay a security deposit.
- *Cons:* Not cheapest if you need multiple lines. Must purchase phone at full price (usually). Can be frustrating if you run out of minutes in the middle of a conversation (for prepaid plan 2).

Contract Plans

In this type of plan, you sign a contract with a cell phone company for a set period of time, usually two years.

- *Pros:* The companies usually subsidize your phone, so you pay less for the actual phone. You can get a discount if you have multiple lines (like a family plan).
- *Cons:* Not flexible because you must sign a contract and you will be charged a large fee (around \$250) if you have to cancel that contract early. Lengthy contracts (2 years). Large security deposit (around \$500) required if you do not have a Social Security Number or a U.S. credit history, thus will be returned if you pay your bills on time for a year.

* How do I get to the Mobile or Cell Phone Store without a car?

Walk to a local grocery store or take the LaSalle Loop bus to Kroger on Hillsborough Rd. or take the C-1 bus (weekdays) or CCX (weekends) to East Campus. Walk up to the Northgate Mall and go to one of the mobile phone stores listed below. OR You can purchase and set up a prepaid phone all online. It will be delivered to your home.

◆ **AT&T Retail Store:** 5348 McFarland Dr., Durham 27707. 919.403.2590.

Fifteen-minute taxi ride from West Campus. An authorized AT&T Agent is also outside Northgate Mall at 1720 Guess Rd., #14, Durham 27701. 919.286.3434. www.attwireless.com AT&T does not charge to change your phone's SIM Card.

◆ **Cricket Communications Retail Stores:** outside Northgate Mall, Mobile Link at 1720 Guess Rd., Durham 27701 919.294.8051. Or near Kroger at 3437 Hillsborough Rd. Suite 120, Durham 27705 919.383.6474. \$45/month phone & unlimited international texting. There is also a \$25 Activation Fee. www.cricketwireless.com

◆ **Radio Shack (Electronics Store):** Northgate Mall, 1058 West Club Blvd., Durham 27701. 919.286.3264. Wide variety of telephones and plans. Recommended: AT&T or T-MOBILE. Will sell a prepaid kit through T-mobile to unlock the SIM Card of your home country phone. Price: \$19.99 plus tax. www.radioshack.com

◆ **T-Mobile:** Northgate Mall, 1058 West Club Blvd., Durham 27701. (Right beside the Food Court) 919.286.1777
T-Mobile: No contract plan that includes Unlimited talk, text & data with up to 1 GB of 4G LTE with no overages. Add international service for \$10/month. T-Mobile charges \$16.30 to change the SIM card on your phone.

◆ **Verizon Retail Store:** Northgate Mall, 1058 West Club Blvd., Durham 27701. 919.286.1900.
OR 1815 North Pointe Dr., Durham 27701. 919.477.1269 www.verizonwireless.com

Local Grocery Stores with Pre-Paid Cell Phones

Food Lion

2930 W. Main St. Durham 27705
TracFone; AT&T Go Phone; Net 10
www.TracFone.com
www.att.com/gophone

Target

4037 Durham-Chapel Hill Blvd, Durham 27707
AT&T Go Phone; Virgin Mobile; Verizon Inpulse; TracFone
www.att.com/gophone
www.virginmobileusa.com

www.NET10.com	www.verizonwireless.com/_prepay/
Kroger 3457 Hillsborough Rd. Durham 27705 919.383.2249 i Wireless Phone; TracFone www.iwirelesshome.com	Walmart 5450 New Hope Commons Dr., Durham 27707 919.489.4412 AT&T Go Phone, Verizon Inpulse; TracFone; Net10 www.verizonwireless.com/_prepay/ www.TracFone.com
Dollar General 800 Broad St., Durham 27701, across from East Campus 919.416.1303 At&T Go Phone, NET10, TracFone www.NET10.com	Harris Teeter 2107 Hillsborough Rd., Durham 27705 919.286.1500 TracFone, NET10, Boost Mobile, AT&T, Verizon, Virgin Mobile and T-Mobile.

Most of the local grocery stores have cell phones and calling cards located in the front of the store. Super stores (Walmart, Target) have cell phones and calling cards located in the Electronics Section of the store.

The most popular cell phone companies in this area continue to be Verizon, AT&T and T-mobile.

Online Options for Purchasing Cell Phones: Wirefly.com, Letstalk.com, amazon.com

Options for Calling Home:

SKYPE: www.skype.com
GOOGLE VOICE: www.google.com/voice
PINGO: www.pingo.com
VONAGE : 1.800.975.0570 www.vonage.com

VOIPO :1.877.998.6476 www.voipo.com
LINGO : 1.888.752.4699 www.lingo.com
WHATSAPP: www.whatsapp.com
KAKAO TALK: www.kakao.com

TERMS AND ADVICE FOR CELL PHONES

Incoming Calls: In the U.S. cell phones are charged both for receiving and for making calls. Please be aware that incoming calls are deducted from either your “free minutes” (contract phones) or your prepaid account. Some companies offer unlimited minutes anytime, free incoming calls, or free “mobile-to-mobile” calling. Make sure you understand your service agreement!

Using Prepaid Phone Cards with your Cell Phone: Please note that phone service charges in the U.S. are very different from those in most other countries! We strongly discourage you from using prepaid phone cards (such as those bought at grocery and drug stores) to make lengthy calls from your cell phone unless you have unlimited minutes or have times that are unlimited (usually nights and weekends) because it will use minutes, even if you are dialing a toll-free number.

Toll-Free Numbers: TOLL-FREE CALLS WILL STILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR ALLOTTED MINUTES PER MONTH AND YOU WILL BE CHARGED PER MINUTE FOR ALL TIME BEYOND WHAT YOU ARE ALLOWED. Some students with contract phones have unexpectedly received bills of more than \$500 because they were not aware of this and used many more minutes than they were allowed.

If you have any concerns about cost-efficient cell phone usage, please contact your service provider or IHouse. You will not be able to dispute charges because you did not understand how charges would be applied.

Using your own phone in the U.S. or taking a U.S. phone abroad: Many companies allow you to bring your own phone here. Check to see if your phone is compatible on company websites or at the store. You need to unlock the phone, be aware of the frequency of the phone (what mhz it communicates in), and if it uses GSM or CDMA. So, for example, if you already have a GSM mobile with a SIM card you can consider joining a GSM network such as T-MOBILE or AT&T if you can unlock your phone and the frequency matches.

HUTCH connections are also not reliable in Durham. Some students have found that even if you have an account that will work on these networks, it is worthwhile to at least look at Verizon and other local providers.

If you want to take your U.S. phone back and use it in your home country, you should also look into these matters and whether a cellular services provider in your home country is compatible with your U.S. phone.

Trial Periods & Breach of Contract: If you are unsure of which network to choose for a contract phone, it is possible to ask for a trial month to test a service provider. Please be advised that with contract plans **there is a breach of contract fee of around \$250** if you terminate your contract early.