



## CONSUMER AFFAIRS

# BUYING A MOBILE PHONE

For a mobile phone service to work it must have a handset and connection to a mobile phone network and a call plan that provides the features you want.

Call plans may involve an up front payment, minimum monthly payments, call charges, access to additional features such as voicemail and a free call feature, OR you may choose a pre-paid.

Pre-paid is where you buy an amount of phone credit from a store, and then following the instructions, contact your service provider to have the amount of credit loaded into your phone.

Pre-paid gives you more control over the amount of money you spend and there are no bills or monthly fee.

## CHOOSING A MOBILE PHONE SERVICE

To choose which phone is right for you, ask yourself these questions –

- Why do I really want a phone?
- What do I really need it to be able to do?
- What would I like it to do?
- What is it going to cost me?
- Can I use my new phone anywhere?
- What does it cost to send messages from the phone (SMS)?

Make sure that the mobile phone you choose works in your area, or the area where you will be travelling to. The sales person should be able to tell you, but to be sure contact the network service provider.

There are many different phones and plans available, so you need to look through the brochures, shop around and get a lot of advice on the best deal that suits your needs, before you sign a contract.

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## **MOBILE PHONE CONTRACTS**

Some network service contracts are for a fixed term. During this period the phone company agrees to provide you with connection to a network for a monthly fee, and in many cases, the use of the handset and a certain number of free calls or text messages per month.

### **PAY MONTHLY (no contract)**

If you own your own handset, most mobile phone companies offer service plans for connecting you to a network on a month-by-month basis. This offers you flexibility to change monthly plans or phone companies more easily.

## **MOBILE PHONE CALL COSTS**

Numbers beginning with 1900 and 1300 are used for consumers to access information, or enter competitions – **THESE ARE NOT FREE CALLS.**

1800 numbers are free calls when calling from a fixed line handset but **call rates apply from a mobile phone.**

It can be expensive to load songs onto your phone from the internet, and to download ring tones or order products using SMS.