



Mobile Company Text Service

SMS isn't just for sending text messages from one phone to another -- it's also a great way to get email messages on your phone.

Most carriers have "SMS gateways" which take email messages from the Internet and deliver them to their customers' cell phones as SMS text messages.

For each carrier, we list more detailed information on how SMS works with that carrier, how much it costs, and for more information, pertaining to texting and updated information, please contact your cell phone provider.

Alltel SMS

If your cellular service provider is Alltel, here's what you need to know about using SMS text messaging with your cell phone. Alltel calls it "Access Text Messaging."

- Maximum message length: 200 characters [according to commenter Edward, below].
- What happens to longer messages: Split into a maximum of two 100-character messages.
- Cost per message: 15 cents per message sent or received; 25 cents per picture message. (Messaging packs reduce the cost if you send hundreds of SMS messages per month.)

AT&T

If AT&T Wireless (formerly Cingular) is your cellular service provider, here's the lowdown on how to use SMS with your phone.

- Maximum message length: 160 characters
- What happens to longer messages: They're broken into 160-character segments and delivered piece by piece.
- Cost per message: 20 cents each to send or receive (or less, if you sign up for a text messaging package); messages sent to international numbers cost 25 cents each.

Boost Mobile SMS

If you've got a cell phone from Boost Mobile, here's what you need to know about using SMS text messaging with your mobile.

- Maximum message length: 500 characters.

- What happens to longer messages: Unknown.
- Cost per message: For pay-as-you-go plans, it's 10 cents per message to send or receive. For unlimited plan users, it's 10 cents per message to send; free to receive. (Same pricing when you send messages to overseas recipients.) Multimedia messages (MMS) cost 25 cents each to send or receive.

Nextel SMS

If your phone is from Nextel (the business side of Sprint Nextel), here's what you need to know about using SMS text messaging with your mobile.

- Maximum message length: 500 characters (including letters, punctuation and system-generated characters).
- What happens to longer messages: Unknown
- Cost per message: 10 cents per message; 25 cents per image/audio message (bulk plans available)

Sprint SMS

Got a Sprint PCS cell phone? Here's what you need to know about using SMS text messaging with your mobile.

- Maximum message length: 160 characters, including the sender's email address, subject line, and callback number
- What happens to longer messages: Everything after 160 characters will be cut off and discarded.
- Cost per message: \$0.15 per message sent and received. Sprint also offers bulk text messaging plans: \$5 monthly for 300 messages/month and \$15 monthly for unlimited text messaging.

T-Mobile SMS

If you've got a T-Mobile cell phone, here's the lowdown on using SMS text messaging with your mobile.

- Maximum message length: 160 characters (including email address, subject line, and body of the message). The subject line is limited to 16 characters and the body of the message can be no longer than 140 characters.
- What happens to longer messages: Unknown
- Cost per message: 10 cents per message. Messages to non-U.S. recipients cost 15 cents to send; sending messages while you are outside the U.S. costs 35 cents. T-Mobile's "Messaging Value Bundles" are cheaper if you send hundreds of SMS messages per month; they start at \$4.99 for 400 messages/month and go up to \$14.99 for unlimited messages.

Verizon SMS

Here's the lowdown on how to use SMS with a Verizon phone.

- Maximum message length: 160 characters, including the sender's email address, subject line, and callback number
- What happens to longer messages: Everything after the 160th character will be cut off and discarded
- Cost per message: 15 cents for each text message you send or receive, 25 cents for picture and video messages ("PIX and FLIX" messages) -- or less, if you sign up for an "IN Messaging" package, starting at \$10/month for 500 messages.

Virgin Mobile SMS

If you've got a cell phone from Virgin Mobile, here's what you need to know about using SMS text messaging with your mobile.

- Maximum message length: 160 characters.
- What happens to longer messages: Anything beyond 160 characters will be cut off.
- Cost per message: 10 cents for each message you send or receive to U.S. numbers. For international recipients, you pay 20 cents/message to send and 10 cents to receive. Monthly Messaging Packs will lower your per-message cost if you use SMS a lot.