

Frequently Asked Questions About Business Hosted VoIP Phone Systems

Basics & General Questions

What is a Hosted VoIP phone system?

A Hosted VoIP phone system is a cloud-based business phone service. Instead of maintaining physical hardware on-site, your phone system runs on servers in a provider's data centre. You manage everything through a web portal, and calls are made over your internet connection.

How is Hosted VoIP different from traditional phone systems?

Traditional systems require on-premises PBX hardware, dedicated phone lines, and specialized technicians for maintenance. Hosted VoIP requires no major hardware investment (beyond phones), uses your internet connection, and is managed entirely by your provider with monthly subscription pricing.

What does "Hosted" or "Cloud" actually mean for my phone service?

It means the core technology that powers your phone system—the call routing, voicemail, auto-attendant, and features—is hosted and maintained by your provider in secure data centers. You access it over the internet. There's no bulky PBX box in your office closet.

Can I keep my existing business phone numbers?

Yes, absolutely. The process is called "number porting," and any reputable provider will facilitate porting your existing local, toll-free, and fax numbers to your new service. This is a standard industry practice.

Technical & Requirements

What do I need to get started with Hosted VoIP?

1. **Reliable High-Speed Internet:** A stable business-grade broadband connection (cable, fiber, or dedicated ethernet) is the most critical requirement.
2. **VoIP Phones:** You can use dedicated IP phones (desk phones), or softphone apps on computers and mobile devices.
3. **Adequate Network Router:** A modern, business-class router that can handle voice traffic is recommended. Your provider may offer a pre-configured router.

How much bandwidth (internet speed) do I need?

As a general rule, you need about **100 Kbps (0.1 Mbps) per simultaneous call**. For example, if 10 people might be on calls at the same time, you'd need a dedicated 1

Mbps upload/download for voice. Your provider can do a precise assessment based on your call volume and internet plan.

What happens if our internet goes down?

Leading providers have built-in redundancy. Common failover options include:

- **Automatic Call Forwarding:** Calls can be instantly rerouted to cell phones or another location.
- **Mobile Apps:** Employees can use the provider's app on their smartphones over cellular data.
- **Provider Redundancy:** High-quality providers have multiple data centers, so if one fails, your service automatically switches to another.

Is the call quality as good as a traditional landline?

Yes, often better. VoIP call quality (clarity, reliability) depends primarily on your internet connection. With a stable, high-speed business internet connection and proper network setup, call quality is typically excellent—often in high-definition (HD Voice).

Can we use our existing desk phones?

Sometimes. If you have recent **IP phones** (not traditional analog phones), they may be compatible. Your provider can check the models. Most often, businesses use phones provided or recommended by the VoIP provider, as they are pre-configured for plug-and-play setup.

Features & Capabilities

What features are typically included?

A robust Hosted VoIP system includes dozens of features, often in a standard package:

- **Core:** Auto-attendant (digital receptionist), IVR menus, call forwarding/transferring, hold music, conference calling, voicemail-to-email.
- **Mobility:** Softphone apps (for computer/mobile), find me/follow me, SMS/MMS texting from business numbers.
- **Management:** Web admin portal, call analytics/reporting, call recording (with consent), user presence status.

Can the system support remote or hybrid workers?

This is one of VoIP's biggest strengths. Employees can work from anywhere with an internet connection. They can use:

- A desk phone at home (connected to their home internet).

- A computer softphone app (with a headset).
- A mobile app on their smartphone, which uses their business number.

To callers, it appears the employee is in the office.

How does the Auto-Attendant (IVR) work?

You record a professional greeting (e.g., "Thank you for calling ABC Company. For Sales, press 1. For Support, press 2."). Callers press a key on their phone and are automatically routed to the correct person, department, or voicemail box. You design the menu structure yourself via the web portal.

Can we send and receive text messages (SMS/MMS)?

Yes, most modern business VoIP plans include SMS/MMS capabilities for your local or toll-free numbers. This is great for appointment reminders, quick updates, and customer service.

Cost & Pricing

How much does a Hosted VoIP system cost?

Pricing is typically a **simple monthly subscription per user/line**. Costs range from **\$20 to \$40 per user, per month**, depending on features and provider. This almost always includes unlimited domestic calling, all features, and support. There are usually no long-term contracts required.

Are there any hidden costs or setup fees?

Reputable providers are transparent. Ask about:

- **One-time setup/activation fees** (sometimes waived).
- **Cost of physical phones** (if you need them). Phones can be purchased outright or often rented monthly.
- **International calling rates** (if applicable).
- **Number porting fees** (sometimes free).

Is it really cheaper than a traditional phone system?

Almost always, yes. You eliminate:

- Costly PBX hardware purchases and maintenance.
- Separate phone line charges (PRI, POTS lines).
- Expensive long-distance and international calling fees.

- On-site technician visits for adds, moves, and changes (you do these yourself via the web portal).

Reliability & Security

How reliable is Hosted VoIP?

Enterprise-grade Hosted VoIP providers guarantee **99.99% to 99.999% uptime** ("five nines") through redundant data centers, power supplies, and internet connections. This often exceeds the reliability of a single on-premise system.

Is VoIP secure? How is our call data protected?

Reputable providers implement enterprise-level security:

- **Encryption:** Calls and signaling are encrypted (often with TLS and SRTP).
- **Network Security:** Data centers are protected with firewalls, intrusion detection, and DDoS mitigation.
- **Compliance:** Many adhere to standards like HIPAA, PCI-DSS, and GDPR.
- **Regular Updates & Patching:** Security patches are applied by the provider automatically.

What about emergency 911 calling (E911)?

Hosted VoIP providers are required by law to offer Enhanced 911 (E911). **You must proactively register the physical address** for each phone line/extension (especially for remote workers). If a user dials 911, this registered address is sent to emergency services. It is crucial to keep this information updated in your web portal.

Implementation & Support

How long does it take to set up?

For a typical small-to-medium business, service can be activated and numbers ported within **1 to 3 weeks**. Setting up users and features can often be done in a single day. The actual "cut-over" (switching service) usually happens over a weekend to minimize disruption.

How difficult is it to manage the system day-to-day?

It's designed to be user-friendly. Through a simple **online admin portal**, you can:

- Add/delete users.
- Change call routing.
- Record new greetings.

- View call reports.
- Reset voicemail passwords.
- No technical expertise is needed.

What kind of support is offered?

Look for providers that offer:

- **24/7 Customer Support:** Via phone, chat, and email.
- **Online Knowledge Base:** Tutorials and guides.
- **Dedicated Account Manager** (for larger businesses).
- **Setup & Onboarding Assistance.**