



Tip Sheet

How to avoid 13 number bill shock

Whether you are on prepaid or post-paid, most mobile phone providers now charge for 13 number calls out of the value included in your plan. For consumers with large or unlimited included value this will mean it is easier to avoid bill shock when calling these numbers.

Consumers on plans that do not include these calls in included value may find extra charges on their bills. Here are some tips to help you avoid big charges for 13 number calls:

Check to see if 13 number charges actually come out of your included value

While many plans include calls to 13 phone numbers, some do not, so avoid a nasty surprise and check how they are charged under your plan before making a call. Some plans also charge for 13 numbers out of a different, smaller bucket of included value. These plans are usually poor value if you regularly call 13 numbers.

Even though they are usually within included value their cost still matters, because a higher rate will chew through your included value faster. On some plans this can be as much as \$1 per minute. So look for the lowest rates to get the most out of your included value.

13 numbers are timed calls from mobiles

Be aware that even though they are now generally part of your included value they are still charged at a timed rate and are not fixed like on your landline.

Track your usage

With spend management tools and SMS usage alerts from your provider, your spending is now much easier to track. Try to avoid making calls once you have exceeded your included value, as just a few calls could end up costing you hundreds of dollars.

Use an alternative contact method or call a 1800 number if available

A number of important services offer call-backs or online facilities, so check online before making a potentially lengthy 13 number call. If the service you need also has a 1800 number try calling that instead. Australian mobile providers committed to making calls to 1800 numbers from mobiles free from 1 January, 2015. Most providers no longer charge for these, however some are still are. Check our [tip sheet](#) for more information on this.

If you have received an unexpectedly high bill due to 13 number bill shock and you cannot resolve the issue with your provider, you can contact the [Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman](#) (TIO). The TIO is a free service that help will help to resolve your complaint quickly.

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
Australia's peak telecommunications consumer advocacy organisation

Suite 4.02, 55 Mountain St, Ultimo NSW 2007
Tel: (02) 9288 4000 | TTY: (02) 9281 5322 | Fax: (02) 9288 4019
www.accan.org.au | info@accan.org.au | [twitter: @ACCAN_AU](https://twitter.com/ACCAN_AU)