



Many Questions

There are hundreds of amazing VoIP providers out there, and they all want your business. Picking the right residential VoIP provider can be a bit overwhelming when faced with VoIP technology jargon and several residential plan options. Use these questions about VoIP providers to help clarify your VoIP shopping process:

- ✓ Do I have high-speed internet?
- ✓ How much is my current monthly phone bill?
- ✓ How often do I call long distance?
- ✓ How often do I make international calls?
- ✓ What kind of payment and/or contract type am I comfortable with?
- ✓ Do I have the equipment required for residential VoIP?



## How Do I Know If My Internet is VoIP Capable?

Run a speed test to see if your broadband connection is qualified for a residential VoIP service.

The most important factor when it comes to the quality of your residential VoIP is your Internet speed. Your broadband speed is important because it will determine whether or not you are qualified for a VoIP service. A poor broadband connection will result in a low-quality call. With a bad connection, you will be affected by things like [jitter](#), [packet loss](#), and bad voice quality. It is important that you **test your broadband connection** ahead of time. [Speed Test](#)



## How Do I Know If My Internet is VoIP Capable?

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Typically, a broadband connection will show 600 kbps for the upload stream and 5000 kbps on the download stream. **It is standard for your upload speed to be less than your download speed.** The upload speed is also the limiting factor and determines if you are capable of making VoIP phone calls.

Unfortunately, if your connection isn't strong enough, you will need to sign up for a faster internet service before you can begin shopping and comparing VoIP providers.



## How Much Do I Pay for My Residential Phone Service?

By switching to VoIP from a traditional phone service, you can save on your monthly phone bill.

After finding out your connection speed, find out how much you pay each month for your current phone service. This will give you a good basis with which to compare VoIP provider's prices.

When looking at how much you pay for phone service, you should also **consider how much you get for what you are paying.**



There are a number of questions to ask yourself about your current phone plan:

1. How much do I pay for phone service?
2. What is included with my service?
3. What features does my phone provider offer?
4. How many minutes do I get a month?
5. What am I charged for long distance and international calls?



## How Often Do I Make Long Distance Calls?

The number of long distance calls you make will determine the type of residential VoIP calling plan you choose.

Residential VoIP customers can save a lot of money on long distance calls. VoIP makes long distance calling cheaper because the data doesn't move through as many networks as a standard call.

Most VoIP providers offer **unlimited long distance minutes**. Some providers charge a low per-minute rate for all calls for both local and long distance calls (normally with a Metered or Pay As You Go plan).

And still yet, select providers offer free on-network calling regardless of location. Check with your provider to see their long distance calling charges.



## How Often Do I Make International Calls?

When compared to traditional phone services, residential VoIP providers offer competitive international calling rates.

International calls work similarly to long distance calling with a VoIP service. Instead of calling local-to-local within one country, you call local-to-local between countries

One thing to compare between residential VoIP providers is how they offer international calling. Most providers offer a certain rate per area per country. Other residential VoIP providers will offer **a certain number of minutes free per month to specific countries.**



## **How Often Do I Make International Calls?**

When compared to traditional phone services, residential VoIP providers offer competitive international calling rates.

Softphone services are also a great way to save money on international calls.

Usually, VoIP providers do not charge for you to use their network for internal calls. So if you and your friends or family use the same VoIP provider/network, then you won't have to pay for those calls.



## What Kind of Payment Am I Comfortable With?

Residential VoIP offers pay as you go, metered, month to month, and long term contract payment options.

**Pay As You Go** plans allow you to use only what you pay for. If you use your phone infrequently, this is a good option for you. Add features, extensions and more for additional charges.

**Metered** plans are very similar to Pay As You Go, in that you pay a per-minute charge for your calls. However, Metered Plans come with all of the call management features that business VoIP providers offer.



## What Kind of Payment Am I Comfortable With?

Residential VoIP offers pay as you go, metered, month to month, and long term contract payment options.

**Month-to-month** plans are more expensive but much more flexible than either Pay As You Go or Metered plans and are offered by top-rated providers like [ITP](#) and [Vonage](#). With month-to-month, you will not be tied into a long-term contract, and can cancel anytime. Depending on the provider, cancelation fees may apply. You also receive a full feature set with your month-to-month plan.

**Contract** plans can be less expensive per month, but you have to pay up front for your service. Oftentimes, you can negotiate for a lower price, free hardware, or more when you sign a long-term contract with a VoIP provider.

## Do I have the Equipment that Residential VoIP Requires?



Residential VoIP needs an existing Internet connection and a VoIP-capable phone to properly function.

You need to **check the equipment your VoIP provider requires**. The common pieces of equipment that a VoIP service requires includes one of the following:

A **softphone** is a type of software provided by the VoIP company that is used to make calls.

An **ATA** enables your current phone to be used with VOIP and is most commonly used when you BYOD (if your provider offers it).

An **IP** phone is a phone that you can directly plug into the internet to make phone calls.

## Do I have the Equipment that Residential VoIP Requires?



Residential VoIP needs an existing Internet connection and a VoIP-capable phone to properly function.

In addition to making sure that you have the proper [internet speed](#), you need to **check the equipment your VoIP provider requires**. Compare providers based on the equipment they provide and require: you can find these details (which change frequently) on their websites.

The common pieces of equipment that a VoIP service requires includes one of the following:

An ATA

IP Phone

Softphone

A softphone is a type of software provided by the VoIP company that is used to make calls. An ATA enables your current phone to be used with VOIP and is most commonly used when you BYOD (if your provider offers it). An IP phone is a phone that you can directly plug into the internet to make phone calls.

Additionally, some residential VoIP providers offer either free equipment or a BYOD option. Check with your provider for specifics.