Porting Timeline and Process

CallTower ← - - - → **New Service Provider** (CallTower Carrier) ← - - - → **Old Service Provider** (Losing Carrier)

On first thought, moving your phone numbers from provider to provider seems like a simple idea. But in reality, it's a process with a lot of complications behind the scenes. In order for your number to port in a timely manner, the whole flow has to go just right.

The FCC/CallTower is on your side

The FCC recognizes that, "delays in number porting cost consumers money and impede their ability to choose providers based solely on price, quality and service." It is the reason portability was introduced in the first place. The intentions are good but, as with anything, there is a process that isn't always perfect. CallTower strives to port your numbers as soon as possible. Providing a company with a copy of your customer service record (CSR) from the losing carrier does eliminate/minimize potential delays in porting.

It starts way back in history

To understand how porting works, and what the process entails, you first need to understand the system porting was invented to work with - the PSTN network.

Phone numbers are maps

The phone number system was set up to be meaningful in terms of provider. First operators, then automated switches both knew where to send calls based on number codes. The area code would get the call to the correct regional switching station. The next three numbers, the "exchange", took the call down to the physical switch level. The four numbers at the end were the numbers assigned to your carrier. This allowed the call to reach your line at your physical home or business address as directed by the exchange.

It's a system invented before people had the wizard-like ability to take phones anywhere. A time when knowing where to send calls was easy because most calls remainded on the same massive network.

Number portability breeds competition

The FCC was right to set phone numbers free upon the breakup of AT&T. Keeping your number was a powerful motivation for loyalty. It would be near impossible for new phone companies to grow if they could only sell service to people getting a phone for the first time, or those willing to go through the headache of changing the phone number they've had for 25 years.

As it solved one problem, the idea of number portability raised another. How could numbers be found if they were no longer organized based on catalogued number assignments? Unless the catalogue was somehow updated in real time, calls would show up at the originally assigned provider's switch and be told, "that number doesn't work here anymore," before being dropped.

How numbers move

Local Number Portability (LNP) was made possible by the creation of an additional numbering system, Location Routing Numbers (LRN), a unique 10-digit telephone number assigned to a switch (there can be multiple LRNs on the same switch). This allows the existing routing paradigm to remain in place. Permitting a gradual conversion of the network to handle LNP traffic. So now the switch that serviced a number originally can be much more helpful and point a call toward the new host switch.

So that's how and why number portability works!

But what's the process?

1. CallTower notifies The New Carrier of the requested port.
2. The new carrier notifies the old service provider of the requested port.
3. The old service provider is asked to validate the subscriber's information.
4. The old service provider confirms the subscriber's information and notifies the new carrier. This is where the process can get caught in a loop if the subscriber information submitted isn't correct. If the information is incorrect, the old service provider "rejects" the port request. The new carrier notifies CallTower of the reject and the reason why (examples provided under the "Make sure your Data is Accurate Section).
5. CallTower notifies our customer and resubmits the request (timeline starts over)
6. Once it is confirmed that the information is correct, the port is scheduled.
7. The port is activated and completed.

Looks straightforward, but each step is a potential snag. Even though much of the process is automated, there are people, and entire organizations, involved along the way. Those people and organizations can cause bottlenecks.

Here's the hold up

A lack of "simplicity" is the number one factor holding up number ports. Many carriers establish arbitrary "rules" around their porting process. Typically, these rules revolve around release date. When your new service provider submits the request to port to your losing service provider (LSP) they're at the mercy of the LSP's response policy. Some carriers we've had the pleasure of working with require 21 days to process port requests.

While we're waiting patiently for that response, the information attached to the porting number, your CSR is being scrutinized to make sure you have the authority to port your number, and avoid erroneous porting - for which carriers can be subject to heavy FCC fines. If there's a mismatch on your CSR or bill data, it can be reported by the losing carrier right before the day the port is expected. A mismatch can be something as small as an initial for a street coordinate (E or East) instead of the word spelled out in an address!

Make sure your data is accurate

Your number has been rejected, now what? There are a number of reasons that this happens. However, the most common are some type of "information mismatch", where the information you provided to CallTower does not match the information in your current telecom provider's systems:

1. Incorrect Billing Telephone Number (the primary number on your current account, often the first part of your account number)
2. Partial Port Request (porting only a subset of the numbers on an account)
3. Incorrect Service Address (customer moved and didn't update their address)
4. Incorrect Company Name
5. There is an existing pending request on the customer's account
6. Unauthorized person signing the paperwork (e.g. someone who is not an Admin on your current telecom account)

There are many other reasons why a port may be rejected, but these are the most common.

Examples like these can cause major delays because the customer has to correct the issue and resubmit the paperwork. With amended data, we then have to request another port release date possibly taking another 12 to 21 days. On occasion, the losing carrier finds another problem with the data (the errors can come one at a time) and the wheel keeps on rolling like this for another few cycles.

It makes sense that carriers want to hold on to numbers. The company that controls the number is the company that gets paid for service. But these days, the customer gets to decide who they pay for phone service. Which is why the FCC mandates cooperation from all parties. To be fair, some ports do require work on the part of the losing carrier.

To help your ports go as quickly as possible, double and triple check your CSR or Bill info before you submit it to CallTower. Accurate data is the grease that gets the wheels moving so you can enjoy all the benefits CallTower has to offer.

If you receive pushback from your existing carrier

In some cases, your current provider might give you significant pushback on obtaining the items above. In these cases, you will need to escalate with your current provider. Below are listed some best practices for doing this:

1. When on the phone with your current provider, state your intention to port numbers away and ask to speak with an escalation department or manager.
   1. The carrier may say "your new provider should be able to get all that" – THAT IS NOT TRUE, and it is the losing carrier's obligation to provide the appropriate information at your request. This is a legal requirement mandated by the FCC.
   2. Send a formal request to your provider. It is recommended that you send this on company letterhead.
2. If you still receive no response, file a complaint with the FCC using this link. This can be done multiple times and as often as needed.
   https://esupport.fcc.gov/ccmsforms/form2000.action?form_type=2000B
   1. Please note that in the second section, question 2, you must list your current provider (e.g. not CallTower) in order for the FCC to deliver the complaint to the appropriate party for resolution.

CallTower will do all we can, on your behalf, to port your numbers. However, CallTower is limited as to what we can do if there is a problem on the losing carrier side.

Summary Table

LSP - Local Service Provider

LSR - Local Service Request (Port Request)

Step	Responsibility	Activity
1	Customer	Customer submits a signed Letter of Authorization to CallTower. An LOA is a document that authorizes the new provider, CallTower in this case, to act on your behalf & make a request to your existing telephone provider to obtain your numbers. This document usually has a place for such information as name, address, telephone numbers to be ported & a signature & needs to be filled out & provided to CallTower. Along with the LOA, you will need to provide a recent copy of a current phone bill or Customer Service Record (CSR). The bill or CSR will have much of the exact information on file with your current telephone company that must match the port request that the provider submits. These bills or CSR cannot be more than 30 days old & needs to have an actual physical address displayed as PO boxes will be a problem.
2	CallTower	Completes a LSR (port request) and sends it to our CallTower LSP (carrier)
3	New CallTower Carrier	Reviews the LSR (port request) and sends it to customer's Losing Carrier
4	LSP	Receives the LSR (port request)and reviews for accuracy and completeness If error, go to step 5 If correct, go to step 9
5	LSP	Rejects the LSR and provide reason for reject
6	New CallTower Carrier	Notifies CallTower of rejection and passes on rejection reason
7	CallTower	Works with customer & corrects errors and re-submits the LSR to CallTower
8	New CallTower Carrier	Re-submits the LSR to the Losing Carrier(LSP), back to step 2
9	LSP	Will process and return an LSR FOC (Firm Order Commitment) date confirming the port date.
10	LSP	Issues internal order for TNs being ported out
11	New CallTower Carrier	Submits pending port request subscription(s)
12	New CallTower Carrier	Completes the port request, if port date will be missed a supplement or cancellation should be issued and **(Additional fees will apply)**
13	LSP	Removes translations and routing
14	New CallTower Carrier	Completes porting of numbers

PLEASE NOTE: Porting 50+ numbers can take up to 15 business days from when the CSR & LOA have been received from the customer and longer if there is a rejection. Porting less than 50 telephone numbers will take 9 business days if there are no rejections from the losing carrier. Once a port has been requested with the carrier, it cannot be rescheduled or cancelled without being assessed additional fees. If you want to push the port out within 48 hours of the FOC date a fee of $75 per telephone number could apply. If you want to push the port out within 24 hours of the FOC date, please also be aware that this close to FOC it may trigger anyway and your numbers could potentially port before you are ready.

Local Number Portability Process

Customer gathers CSR from losing carrier, signs LOA

Customer returns to losing carrier to fix rejection issue

CallTower resubmits port request with gaining carrier

CallTower submits LOA and CSR to gaining carrier

rejection

2-3 business days

2-3 business days

Gaining carrier submits port request to losing carrier

Gaining carrier resubmits port request to losing carrier

approval

49 or less TN's 3-6 days
50+ TN's 10 business days

approval

FOC received

Port completed

FOC received

Port completed

49 or less TN's 3-6 days
50+ TN's 10 business days