

Changing the way we communicate

Voice calling for rural communities

For decades Kiwis in rural parts of New Zealand have relied on traditional phone lines to keep in touch.

That's been changing and we now have mobile phones, wireless technology, and modern satellite technology which have opened up a world of voice calling options over the internet.

Not only do these options provide more flexibility and functionality than a landline delivered over the copper network, but they can be cheaper too. Plus you can keep your landline phone handset to use with these newer technologies if you prefer.

Over the next decade, Chorus plans to retire the copper network, so it could be worth trying one of the alternative phone services sooner rather than later.

Each option outlined below takes a few simple steps to set up and has the potential to greatly improve the way you communicate.

What are my voice calling options?



MOBILE

If your property has mobile coverage, you can use your mobile phone to make and receive voice calls. Mobile phones are simple and easy to use and it's cheaper than paying for both a mobile and a landline phone.

Things to be aware of:

Check the detail of your mobile plan to make sure you have enough calling minutes.



WI-FI CALLING

If your property doesn't have mobile coverage, but you have a broadband service, then you may be able to use your mobile phone to make and receive voice calls over Wi-Fi. Most mobile providers and smartphones support this feature. Wi-Fi calling only uses a small amount of data to provide a good voice quality so most broadband services, including wireless and satellite, will comfortably support it.

Once you know your mobile phone provides this, it's easy to enable in the settings on your device, and it's just like making a regular mobile phone call.

Things to be aware of:

Some older mobile phones might not support Wi-Fi calling. Like mobile calls, Wi-Fi calling may deduct calling minutes from your mobile plan. Because Wi-Fi voice calling relies on the internet, it can be affected during an internet outage.

How to enable Wi-Fi calling on your smartphone:

iPhone:

Go to Settings > Phone > Wi-Fi calling
Toggle on Wi-Fi Calling

Samsung:

Open Settings
Select Connections
Toggle on Wi-Fi Calling

For more information:

spark.co.nz/help/mobile/understand/wifi-calling/
one.nz/our-networks/wifi-calling/
2degrees.nz/help/mobile-help/calling-features/wifi-calling





BUNDLING VOICE AND BROADBAND SERVICES

If you have an existing wireless or satellite broadband service, speak to your provider about whether they offer voice calling and internet together. A voice service can often be easily set up with the same landline handset that you have used before, including features like call forwarding, call waiting and voicemail. With one bill and one provider it keeps things simple, plus it's often cheaper than having a separate landline over the copper network.

Things to be aware of:

Some fixed wireless and satellite broadband providers may not offer a voice service, so have a chat to your provider about your options.



VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VoIP)

If you have an existing broadband service but the provider doesn't offer a voice bundle (e.g. Starlink), you can order a separate voice calling service from a specialist VoIP provider (e.g. KiwiVoIP). This can be easy to setup and manage with features including call forwarding, call waiting and voicemail. It works with the same landline handset that you've used before, and you can transfer your existing home phone number to the service.

Things to be aware of:

A VoIP service relies on the internet, so it can be affected during an internet outage.

For more information about VoIP calling: kiwivoip.co.nz/starlink-voip-nz/



If there is a power cut and I don't have mobile phone coverage, how can I contact 111 in an emergency?

As recent weather events have demonstrated, all network technology including copper landlines are susceptible to the elements, and rely on power to operate, so it's important you are prepared in the event the power goes out.

If your mobile phone is outside of your mobile provider's network coverage, but within the coverage of another provider, you can still contact 111 emergency services.

For rural properties with limited or no mobile coverage, a generator or battery back-up device can be a good solution during a power cut.

What if I need extra support to contact 111 during an emergency?

The Commerce Commission's 111 Contact Code supports vulnerable consumers who rely on a landline phone through fibre, wireless or VoIP to call 111.

You may be considered a vulnerable consumer if you do not have an alternative way to contact 111, e.g. via mobile phone, and if you can demonstrate to your provider that you are at particular risk of requiring 111 emergency services for health, safety or disability reasons.

If this sounds like you, you should contact your telecommunications provider and apply for a free device to help ensure you can contact 111 emergency services during a power cut. You can find out more about the 111 Contact Code by visiting the New Zealand Telecommunications Forum (TCF) website: tcf.org.nz/landline/111-contact-code

A helpful tip

While you're considering the best possible voice calling option for your property, it's a good idea to visit the website www.broadbandmap.nz. This is a great tool provided by InternetNZ that can show you what broadband options and service providers are available at your property.

Still have questions? We are here to help.

0800 600 100
info@chorus.co.nz