

FAQ: Ten-Digit Numbering Requirements for VRS and IP Relay

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules that require Video Relay Service (VRS) and Internet Protocol (IP) Relay users to obtain a “real” ten-digit telephone number to place and receive calls using VRS and IP Relay.

Why did the FCC adopt these rules?

The rules provide two key benefits: (1) they make it easier for hearing persons to call VRS or IP Relay users by dialing just the relay user’s ten-digit telephone number. Callers do not need to know the user’s IP address or “proxy” number to call; (2) these rules allow a VRS or IP Relay provider to automatically deliver the relay user’s location information to the appropriate 911 call center when the user makes an emergency 911 call.

What do relay users need to do?

Users should get a ten-digit telephone number from the VRS or IP Relay provider of their choice. Note that if you use both types of relay service, you will need a separate ten-digit number for each.

To get a ten-digit telephone number, you must first select a “default,” or preferred, VRS or IP Relay provider and register with that provider. To register, you will need to provide your name and the address from which you will be making VRS or IP Relay calls. That address is your “Registered Location.”

When do I need to register?

All VRS or IP users should have been registered as of November 12, 2009. You should register immediately, if you haven’t already.

Why do I need to register with a VRS or IP Relay provider?

You need to register so that your VRS or IP Relay service provider can handle your 911 calls efficiently and route them to the correct 911 call center. If you have not registered yet, you will not be able to place any calls (except 911).

Will I be able to use any VRS or IP Relay provider’s service after I register?

Yes. Registration will not change the way you normally place a VRS or IP Relay call with any provider. You will still be able to place a call through any VRS or IP Relay provider by going to that provider’s Internet address or website with your videophone or computer.

Can I change my preferred provider?

Yes. You can switch to a new preferred provider at any time. You can also keep your ten-digit telephone number with your new preferred provider.

What happens to my video device if I change my preferred VRS provider?

You may keep your video device. Your former and new preferred providers must make sure that you can still use your video device after you make the switch. But some enhanced features such as speed dial lists or missed call lists may not be available after switching preferred providers.

How many ten-digit numbers may I have?

You must have separate ten-digit numbers for each service, VRS and IP Relay. In addition, you may have a separate ten-digit number for each piece of equipment. For example, you may get one number for a videophone at home and a second number for a videophone at the office.

How will my new ten-digit number affect my toll-free number?

You may keep a current toll-free number or obtain a new toll-free number, but your preferred provider must make sure that your toll-free number works with your ten-digit number.

What should I do if I have problems calling 911 through VRS or IP Relay?

If you have a problem calling 911 through VRS or IP Relay, the most important thing is to get help first. If your call is not going through using your default VRS or IP Relay provider, you can use a different provider's service to place the 911 call. However, you will have to give the provider your location information and ten-digit number in order to help them handle your emergency call. Also, if you have a TTY, you may use it to call 911 directly. Remember that you may not be able to use your VRS or IP Relay service if there is an Internet or power outage.

Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Alternate formats

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