

Millions of Americans now own cellular phones. But many older customers may not be familiar with some of the cell phone rules. Here is a "Cell Phone Quiz" adapted from an AARP publication. Test your knowledge. (Answers follow at the end.)

- 1. How much does the average user spend on cell phone service each month?**
 - a. \$78 d. \$38
 - b. \$64 e. \$26
 - c. \$49

- 2. What percent of cell phone customers use all of the minutes included in their service plan every month?**
 - a. 93% d. 56%
 - b. 81% e. 37%
 - c. 68%

- 3. Cell phone companies charge customers extra fees beyond the advertised rates. These hidden fees make up what percentage of the cost of cell phone service?**
 - a. 1% d. 10%
 - b. 2% e. 20%
 - c. 3%

- 4. If you switch cell phone providers, can you keep your same cell phone number?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 5. Once you buy a cell phone, can you use your same cell phone if you switch service providers?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 6. In general, all of the following types of calls count against your monthly minutes each month, EXCEPT:**
 - a. incoming calls
 - b. toll-free 800 calls
 - c. checking voice messages
 - d. calls to 911 or customer service
 - e. calling card calls

Answers:

- 1. c.** As of June, 2003, the average monthly cell phone bill was \$49.46.
- 2. d.** 56% use all their minutes every month. Customers report using only 365 minutes of time per month.
- 3. e.** Fees, such as number-portability, directory assistance, setup fees, service termination fees, add 20% to the cost of cell phone service.
- 4. a.** Yes, you can take your phone number with you if you switch providers, but not if you move to another state or metro area; you can also lose your number if you drop one company before signing up for another. Sign up for new service before canceling the old.
- 5. b.** Cell phones are often incompatible among different wireless providers, so most consumers will need to buy a new phone if they move their number to another service provider.
- 6. d.** The major cell phone companies do not charge for calls to emergency services or to their own customer service department. The rest of the calls listed will all cost you minutes.

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