

| CATEGORY | ANALOG CELLULAR | DIGITAL CELLULAR | PCS |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Frequency | 800 MHz | 800 MHz | 1900 MHz |
| Call Quality | Can lack clarity | Very clear | Very clear |
| Coverage: Nationwide Rural Access | Complete Good | Build-out in progress Poor | Build-out in progress Poor, may take a few years to improve |
| Security | Can be intercepted | More secure | More secure |
| Cost Phones Airtime | Inexpensive More than digital | Generally more expensive Less than analog | Generally more expensive Less than analog |
| Features | Call waiting, Call forwarding | Call waiting, call forwarding, Caller ID, voicemail, text messaging, numeric paging, Internet access | Call waiting, call forwarding, Caller ID, voicemail, text messaging, numeric paging, Internet access |
| Battery Life Talk Time On, Not Talking | 1½ - 2 hours 24 - 40 hours | 2 - 10 hours 3 - 17 days | 2 - 10 hours 3 - 17 days |

Access Fee: A special fee that local telephone companies are allowed to charge all telephone customers, including wireless, for the right to connect with the local phone network.

Airtime: Actual time spent talking on a cellular telephone. The longer you talk the higher the bill.

Calling Party Pays: This phrase is used when a person making a call to a cell phone pays for the call instead of the person who receives it. "Calling party pays" is available on a very limited basis.

Off-peak: The part of the day defined by the provider when customers can expect to pay reduced airtime rates, usually evenings and weekends.

PCS: *Personal Communications Service* A two-way digital voice, messaging and data wireless telephone service.

Peak: The part of the day defined by the provider when customers can expect to pay full service calling rates.

Roaming: The term given to a cellular phone's ability to make and receive calls outside the customer's home calling area.

Smart Phone: An expression used for cellular phones that can send and receive voice and data messages.

Wireless Phone: Cellular, mobile, portable, in-car mounted, and bag phones are wireless.

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Myths & Magic

Cellular Phones



South Dakota Public Utilities Commission

State Capitol Building
500 East Capitol
Pierre SD 57501
Call: 1-800-332-1782

- ◆ **Emergency Calls:** In most areas just dial 911. You must know your exact location.
- ◆ **Conversation Privacy:** Conversations can be “picked up” on regular analog cellular service. Digital service is more secure.
- ◆ **Usage Costs:** In the United States, whether you place or receive a call on your cell phone, you are the one who pays for the call.
- ◆ **Out-of-Area Calls:** Your home calling area is defined by your service plan. If you make or receive a call outside the boundaries of your home area, you may be charged long distance and/or roaming fees.
- ◆ **Restricted Use:** Some businesses such as hospitals, airlines, and theaters may restrict use of cell phones because the frequency can affect other equipment. Gas stations may caution against use of cell phones while refueling. If a phone is dropped and the battery is exposed it could emit sparks.
- ◆ **Toll-free calls may not be toll free on cell phones.**
Cellular service charges for “airtime”. Read your contract or check with your provider before making a toll-free call.
- ◆ **Contracts:** Cell phone plans have numerous options, and many companies are willing to make changes from one plan to another during the length of the contract. Check with your provider concerning penalties or cancellation fees.
- ◆ **Off-Peak & Weekend Hours:** Many companies provide unlimited off-peak and weekend calling hours as part of their standard service. Make sure to ask the provider or read the contract to see if this service is available to you.



Cellular or wireless service is not regulated at the state level. If you have questions, comments or concerns, you may contact the Federal Communications Commission at:

Consumer Information Bureau
Call: 1-888-225-5322 (Voice)
Call: 1-888-835-5322 (TTY)
Website: www.fcc.gov

