

Seek help when things go wrong

Sometimes things can go wrong and it is important that you are aware of what steps you can take to address your issue at the earliest time possible. If you are encountering any problems with your mobile telephony, fixed telephony, internet and TV services, you must **first contact your service provider**. In most cases, the service provider will be able to solve your issue without the need to continue pursuing your case even further. The below are just a few tips you may wish to consider to help you make an effective complaint with your service provider.

- Where possible, lodge your complaint in writing, explaining your problem clearly and specifying how you expect the service provider to resolve your complaint.
- State your name and relevant contact details.
- Support your case with copies of any relevant documentation, such as contracts and bills.
- Keep record of your service provider's representative/s you are dealing with, including date and time of your interactions.
- Always keep a copy of any written communications you have exchanged with your service provider.
- Ask for action within a specific and reasonable period.

If you are still not satisfied with your service provider's response (if any) to your complaint, you can **lodge a complaint with the Malta Communications Authority (MCA)**. The MCA has a complaint-handling function whereby it investigates complaints related to the services it regulates. These are just a few issues which the MCA can help you with:

- If you experience a service failure
- If you are charged incorrectly for a communications service
- If the quality of your communications service levels do not match to what was agreed in your contract
- If you encounter difficulties whilst terminating your communications service
- If you experience difficulties when switching your telephony service from one service provider to another whilst retaining your number.

When lodging a complaint with the MCA it is important to provide as much information as possible. Depending on the nature of your complaint, the MCA would require the following information to address your complaint more efficiently:

- A copy of your service contract
- Copies of bills
- Copies of any correspondence with your service provider that relate to your complaint
- Any other relevant documentation, such as service termination form, direct debit application form; number portability form.

MCA's intervention with respect to your complaint depends on the nature of your complaint and also on the relevant legal powers. The MCA will follow-up your matter with your service provider until the necessary remedial action/s are taken. During this process, the MCA will provide you with all the relevant information on the matter, so that you will have a better understanding of what your service provider's obligations are, what your rights are and the possible courses of action available to you.

In some instances even though your complaint might be related to a communications service, the MCA may not be able to intervene directly. Nevertheless, in such circumstances, the MCA will still assist you by directing you to the appropriate forum where you can pursue your case even further.

Termination of a communications service

● What happens after my contract expires?

If you are subscribed to a mobile and fixed telephony, internet or TV service and you are bound by a minimum contractual agreement, check what happens after your contract expires. Keep in mind that your service is not terminated there and then and your contract is renewed for an indefinite period. This means that you can continue using your service and can terminate your service whenever you like without incurring any penalties. Some service providers also notify their subscribers before their contract expires.

Be aware that upon expiry of your contract, your monthly fee may increase.

Hence, check with your service provider whether this applies in your case.

● What steps should I take to terminate my service?

If you are bound by a minimum contractual period, check whether you are still within the contractual period. In any case, you may still terminate your service, however, **if you terminate your service within the contractual period, you may incur early termination fees**. Furthermore, if you have benefitted from a subsidised equipment such as a mobile device, you may also need to refund part, or all the costs of the equipment.

Should you still wish to terminate your service, it is important to follow your service provider's termination procedure. Certain service providers provide different channels how consumer can terminate their service, such as visiting one of the service providers' retail outlets, by calling their customer care, through their online portal, or by sending a notification in writing. Note that if your service provider requires a notification in writing, the notification period should not exceed 1 month.

Since the termination procedure differs from one service provider to another, check the applicable termination procedure by reviewing your contract or by calling your service provider's customer care.

Before terminating your service make sure that you have settled any outstanding bills because your service provider may not entertain your request to terminate the service. You should also ensure that any equipment provided by your service provider is handed back to the service provider upon termination.

Be aware that if you are subscribed to a pre-paid account with your existing service provider you may lose any unused credit.

● Can I keep my telephony number when switching service provider?

If you intend to switch your mobile and fixed telephony services to an alternative service provider, remember that you can port your telephony number by asking your alternative service provider to initiate this process on your behalf. For further information please visit [MCA's FAQs section](#).

● What if my service provider decides to change my contract halfway through my contract?

Your service provider can change the terms and conditions of your contract. However, your service provider is required to inform you 1 month before the implementation of such changes and provide you with the possibility to terminate your contract without incurring any early termination fees, should you not agree with the proposed changes. For more information please visit [MCA's FAQs section](#).