

How to Get a UPC Code for Mobile Number Porting in India

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Quick answer

A Unique Porting Code (UPC) is a one-time code from your current mobile operator that authorizes you to switch networks while keeping your phone number. To get one, send an SMS with PORT followed by your 10-digit mobile number to 1900, and you'll receive the code via SMS from 1901 within minutes.

If you've ever switched mobile networks while keeping your phone number, you've already dealt with a Unique Porting Code, even if you didn't think much about it at the time. It's one of those things that flies under the radar until you actually need it, and then it becomes the center of everything.

Before you make the switch, though, one thing's worth keeping in mind: don't change networks just because someone else says one carrier is better. In India, network performance is intensely location-specific. A carrier that works brilliantly in one neighborhood might barely register a signal two streets away. Check call quality, data speeds, indoor coverage, and reliability in your area before committing. Also note that once you port, you're typically locked in for at least 90 days before you can port again.

What Is a Unique Porting Code (UPC)?

A Unique Porting Code is a code issued by your current mobile provider that authorizes the transfer of your phone number to a new network. It's a core part of the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process, which lets you move between operators, Jio to Airtel, Vi to BSNL, or any other combination, without losing your number.

Think of it as a one-time porting password, uniquely tied to your mobile number. According to TRAI guidelines, a UPC isn't optional, no new operator can process your port request without it. So if you're unhappy with Vi after the Vodafone-Idea merger, or you're finding gaps in your current network's coverage, this code is where the process starts. In states like Kerala, for instance, many users choose to port to BSNL for better rural and indoor coverage.

What Is the Purpose of a UPC?

The UPC acts as a verification PIN for the porting process. When you provide it to your new operator, they send a porting request to your current operator, who checks the code against their records. If everything matches and all eligibility conditions are met, the request is approved and the process moves forward.

If the code is incorrect or expired, the request gets rejected and you'll need to start over with a fresh code. The system is designed this way to prevent unauthorized number transfers, your consent has to be explicit and verifiable.

Eligibility requirements have also tightened in recent years. Your number must have been active on its current network for at least 90 days, postpaid bills must be cleared, and there can't be any pending ownership changes or legal holds on the number. Since 2024, TRAI has also added a seven-day waiting period for anyone who recently swapped or replaced their SIM, a measure introduced to reduce porting fraud. Full details are in the 2024 MNP amendment.

How Do You Generate a UPC?

Generating a UPC takes about ten seconds. From the mobile number you want to port, send an SMS to 1900 in this exact format:

PORT [Your 10-Digit Mobile Number]

For example, if your number is 9123456789, send:

PORT 9123456789

You'll receive a reply from 1901 with your UPC and its expiration date. This works the same way across all carriers, Airtel, Jio, Vi, and BSNL. Jio also walks you through this step in their official guide.

Once you have the code, here's what comes next:

1. Visit your new operator's store or authorized retailer with the UPC in hand.
2. Complete the Know Your Customer (KYC) process and submit your identity and address documents.
3. The new operator submits your porting request to your current provider.
4. Track your status, TRAI mandates SMS updates at every step, from submission through final activation.

One thing that catches prepaid users off guard: your remaining balance doesn't transfer to the new operator. If you're on postpaid, clear all outstanding bills before initiating the process. Many carriers now offer digital onboarding, but the core steps remain the same.

How Long Does the Porting Process Take?

Porting timelines vary depending on whether you're staying within the same service area or crossing into a different one. Here's what TRAI's guidelines specify:

- Same licensed service area: 3 working days.
- Different service areas: 5 working days.
- Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, and North East circles: Up to 15 working days.

The actual network switchover typically happens during late-night hours, and any service interruption is capped at four hours or less. You can find the full breakdown in TRAI's updated MNP FAQ.

How Long Is a UPC Valid?

In most Indian states, a UPC is valid for 4 days. In Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, and the North East, that window extends to 30 days. The day you generate the code doesn't count toward its validity period.

Don't wait until the last day to use it. Submitting early gives you room to deal with any hiccups, missing documents, KYC delays, or operator queues. TRAI caps the porting transaction fee at Rs. 6.46, though many carriers waive this entirely to make switching easier.

What Happens If Your UPC Expires?

An expired UPC is no longer usable, you'll need to generate a new one and restart the process. That said, if your porting request was already submitted before the code expired, you don't need to worry. The process will continue normally.

The real trouble happens when someone waits until the final day and then hits an unexpected delay. Submit your request early to avoid that situation entirely.

Can You Cancel a Port Request After Submitting It?

Yes, you have a 24-hour window to withdraw a porting request after submitting it. Send this SMS to 1900 from your number:

CANCEL [Your 10-Digit Mobile Number]

Once the cancellation is processed, your UPC is voided. Note that any porting fees already paid are non-refundable, per TRAI guidelines.

Why Might You Be Unable to Get a UPC?

If your UPC request is rejected, it usually comes down to one of these reasons:

- Your number hasn't been active on the current network for 90 days yet.
- You have unpaid postpaid dues that need to be cleared first.
- You recently replaced your SIM and the mandatory seven-day waiting period hasn't passed.
- Your number has a pending ownership transfer or a contractual restriction on it.

When a request is denied, your operator is required to send you an SMS explaining why. Address that specific issue before making another attempt.

Does the Porting Process Differ Between Jio, Airtel, Vi, and BSNL?

The core process is identical regardless of which operator you're moving to or from. Generate your UPC, complete KYC, submit your request, and wait for the switchover, that's the same whether you're going from Jio to Airtel, Airtel to BSNL, or Vi to Jio.

Where operators differ is in the experience around the process. Jio, for example, offers home SIM delivery in many areas, while others depend primarily on in-store visits. But marketing perks aside, what actually matters is how well a network performs at your address. That's the only metric that should drive your decision.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a UPC code for mobile number portability in India?

A UPC (Unique Porting Code) is a one-time code issued by your current mobile operator that verifies your consent to transfer your number to a new network. It's required by TRAI before any porting request can be processed. You generate it by sending PORT [your number] to 1900 from the number you want to port.

How do I get a UPC code to port my number?

Send an SMS to 1900 from your mobile number in this format: PORT [Your 10-digit number]. You'll receive a reply from 1901 with your UPC and its expiry date within a few minutes. This process works the same way on Airtel, Jio, Vi, and BSNL.

How long is a UPC valid in India?

A UPC is valid for 4 days in most Indian states. In Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, and the North East circles, the validity period is 30 days. The day you generate the code is not counted as part of the validity window.

What should I do if my UPC expires before I use it?

If your UPC expires before you submit your porting request, simply generate a new one by sending PORT [your number] to 1900 again. If your request was already submitted before the code expired, the porting process will continue without interruption.

Why is my UPC request being rejected?

Common reasons include: your number hasn't been active for 90 days, you have unpaid postpaid bills, you recently replaced your SIM (a seven-day waiting period applies), or there's a pending ownership change on the number. Your operator must send you an SMS with the specific reason for rejection.

Can I cancel a mobile number port request after submitting it?

Yes. You have 24 hours after submission to cancel by sending CANCEL [your number] to 1900. Once cancelled, the UPC is invalidated. Porting fees already paid are non-refundable under TRAI's rules.

References

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