

Why I am Seeing This Phone Number Cannot be Used for Verification and How to Solve it

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Quick answer

The phone number cannot be used for verification error tells you almost nothing. These are the usual causes and how to get past it.

Key points

- Categorize the error first: Determine whether you're facing a usage cap, eligibility issue, or temporary block before trying any fixes to avoid wasted effort
- VoIP, Google Voice, and virtual numbers are almost universally rejected across platforms like Google and OpenAI-use a real carrier-issued mobile SIM instead
- Phone numbers have reuse limits : Platforms track how many accounts a number has helped create, and even newly purchased prepaid numbers can fail if they're recycled from previous use
- Temporary risk blocks require patience : After too many rapid failed attempts, wait a full 24 hours, avoid VPNs and repeated retries, and make only one clean attempt
- If the error appears before any code is sent , it's an eligibility problem; if the code is sent but never arrives, it's a network/carrier filtering issue-these require different solutions
- Generic Android troubleshooting (restarts, cache clearing, OS updates) rarely helps when the issue is server-side number flagging rather than device-level problems
- Use official alternate verification paths offered by the platform (like backup email, WhatsApp, or voice call options) rather than third-party workarounds
- When a second eligible number works, immediately update your recovery options to prevent getting blocked again later with the same dead-end number

You type in your number, wait for the code, and then hit a wall with a rejection message that tells you basically nothing. That's what makes this so annoying. It looks like a straightforward SMS hiccup, but most of the time it's not. What catches people off guard is that the exact same error pops up for completely different reasons. Maybe the number's been recycled through too many accounts already. Maybe the platform doesn't accept that type of number at all. Or maybe the system flagged your signup behavior as suspicious, and now it'll keep blocking you no matter how many times you hit refresh. If you've been wasting hours toggling between browsers, wiping app data, and testing the same SIM over and over, pause right there. The quickest path forward is figuring out whether you're stuck on a temporary retry block, a number eligibility issue, or a hard usage cap.

What this message actually means

Google's official line is pretty direct: certain numbers can't be used because the platform caps how many accounts any single phone number can help set up. Google spells this out in its Google verification help, and you'll see the same logic applied across other services that rely on phone checks. This isn't unique to Gmail either. OpenAI flat-out rejects landlines, VoIP numbers, Google Voice numbers, and premium lines for verification, and it also limits how many times you can reuse one number for phone checks. Worth noting because it shows The point is a standard anti-abuse tactic baked into modern signup flows.

Where things are really breaking down

The simplest way to diagnose this is to stop treating it like one single problem. In reality, it breaks down into a few different scenarios, and each one needs its own fix. Data last verified: April 2026

What you see: "This phone number cannot be used for verification" on a new account | Most likely cause: The number has already helped create too many accounts | What usually works: Use a different mobile number from a real carrier | What usually does not: Retrying the same number repeatedly

What you see: Number is rejected immediately every time | Most likely cause: VoIP, virtual, landline, premium, or ineligible carrier class | What usually works: Switch to a standard mobile SIM number | What usually does not: Using Google Voice, app numbers, or disposable SMS services

What you see: It worked before, then suddenly fails during recovery or signup | Most likely cause: Temporary risk flag or anti-abuse cooldown | What usually works: Wait 24 hours, change device/network, then retry once | What usually does not: Spamming resend, switching through many failed attempts quickly

What you see: Fresh prepaid or newly activated number still fails | Most likely cause: Recently recycled number, weak carrier reputation, or hidden prior use | What usually works: Try a different postpaid or long-held mobile number | What usually does not: Assuming "new to me" means "new to the platform"

What you see: Voice-based services reject the number | Most likely cause: The carrier or number class is not eligible for that product | What usually works: Use another eligible personal mobile number | What usually does not: Trying to reclaim or reuse the same linked number

Here's what a lot of guides gloss over: a number can work perfectly fine for regular calls and texts but still bomb out during account verification because the service is judging history and category, not just whether your SIM is active.

The fixes actually worth your time

1. Ditch virtual, VoIP, and app-based numbers

If your number came from Google Voice, a VoIP app, a web SMS service, or any throwaway provider, treat that as the first thing to rule out. OpenAI says this outright in its OpenAI VoIP policy, and Google Voice has its own set of eligibility restrictions too. A regular carrier-issued mobile number gives you the best shot. In practical terms, that means a standard SIM from a mainstream telecom provider, not a forwarding number, not a browser-based phone service, and definitely not some free SMS inbox you grabbed online.

2. Check if the number's been used too many times already

Google doesn't publish a neat public counter for consumer accounts, but it does say numbers have limits on how many accounts they can create. OpenAI is more upfront about it and says one number can only be used up to three times for phone verification in scenarios where its phone verification rule kicks in. That gives you a useful mental model: reuse matters, and platforms are tracking it. Check out the OpenAI reuse limit if you want a concrete example. If you've already used your number across a few old signups, test with a family member's standard mobile number once. If that goes through right away, your original number is probably hitting a usage cap rather than dealing with a formatting or device issue.

3. Don't assume "fresh" prepaid numbers are a magic fix

I've seen people think a newly purchased SIM should solve this instantly. Not always. A number can be brand new to you and still carry baggage in the provider ecosystem, especially if it got recycled. Community reports around Gmail show exactly this pattern, where even recently obtained numbers still fail verification. If a brand-new prepaid line still gets rejected, switch to a number that's been stable for a while on a normal carrier account. That tends to work better than bouncing between multiple cheap temporary SIMs.

4. If you triggered a risk block, step back before trying again

Google support threads keep pointing people toward waiting and retrying later, and one official community response mentions a 24-hour wait as the practical next move for some blocked numbers. That's not a guaranteed fix, but it's the right call after too many rapid attempts. What helps here is boring but effective: wait a full day, use one clean retry, skip the VPN, avoid browser automation, and don't keep hammering the resend button. What makes things worse is trying five numbers in ten minutes from the same device and network.

5. Use the service's alternate path if one exists

Some services offer a call, WhatsApp, backup email, recovery prompt, or secondary confirmation flow. Google says some verifications can use a call instead of a text, while OpenAI says its phone verification is SMS-only or WhatsApp in supported countries, not voice call or email. The key point is simple: stick to the alternatives the service itself offers, not random workarounds from third-party sites. Google documents its own paths in the AdMob phone guide, and the same rule of platform-approved methods applies more broadly.

What's not worth your time

A lot of pages ranking for this problem turn it into a generic Android troubleshooting checklist. That's where people lose time. Restarting your phone, clearing Play Services cache, or updating the OS might help if SMS delivery is broken, but those steps do little when the service has already flagged the number as overused or ineligible. If the error shows up before any code is sent, think eligibility first. If the code gets sent but never arrives, think network, carrier filtering, spam blocking, or messaging issues. Those are two separate problems, and mixing them together is why so many guides feel vague.

How to pick the right next step quickly

You can cut through this pretty fast by matching your situation to the likely cause.

- If you used a virtual number, stop and switch to a real mobile SIM.
- If you reused the same number on several old accounts, test one different family number once.

- If a newly bought prepaid SIM fails instantly, assume recycled or low-trust number history and try a longer-held carrier number.
- If you hit several failed attempts in a row, wait 24 hours before the next retry.
- If the platform offers another verification route, use that official route only.

If you're trying to reduce how often services force you into this mess, it also helps to minimize where your number is exposed. TechRounder has related guides on mobile privacy exposure, keeping signup options open with email without phone checks, cleaning up your footprint in Truecaller number removal, and strengthening account access with WhatsApp two-step setup.

When the answer really is just "use another number"

Sometimes that advice sounds lazy, but it's the right answer. If the service has flagged the number category, the carrier class, or the account-creation history, there's nothing to "repair" on your phone. The fastest fix is switching to an eligible mobile number and moving on. If that second number works, don't keep debugging the original one. Save your time, finish the signup or recovery flow, and then update your recovery options properly so you don't get boxed into the same dead end later.

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