



Satellite Phone

Description

Satellite phone connections explained

In some parts of regional, rural and remote Australia, a mobile phone connection is simply not possible. Satellite phones (Satphones) are used in these areas as a portable solution or often as an emergency option during landline technology repairs.

Satphones are typically used outdoors and rely on space-based satellite networks. They often serve as the only way of establishing a reliable voice connection to these remote regions. It's important to note that they do not replace home phone options.

- [Fix an issue](#)
- [Escalate an issue](#)

Everything you need to know about satellite phone connections

01. What is a satellite phone?

A satellite phone, or satphone for short, is a unique type of mobile phone. It doesn't use the standard cell towers on the ground to make calls. Instead, it connects to the phone network via satellites in space. This advanced tech can cover a wider geographic area, which is particularly useful for when you're on the move.

In general, satphones are about the same size as a larger mobile phone but may be heavier and broader. You could also use a "[SatSleeve](#)", which fits around your regular smartphone like an iPhone or Samsung Galaxy, turning it into a satellite phone. However, you'll need both a satellite phone plan and a standard mobile phone plan to make calls on both networks.

02. How does a satellite phone work?

When you call or send a message on a satphone, a signal is sent to one of multiple small satellites in orbit around the earth. This satellite then transmits the signal to the recipient of your message. Return messages travel the same path in reverse. This is very different from a home



phone or landline. These use a wired connection to a phone network or a mobile phone, which receives and transmits wireless signals from a signal tower.

Several companies provide satellite phone services. Each network uses a mixture of satellites they own and satellites owned by others to achieve as wide coverage as possible.

The networks available in Australia are:

- [Iridium](#) (used by Telstra)
- [Globalstar](#)
- [Thuraya](#) (used by Optus)
- [Inmarsat](#)
- [Pivotel](#)

Having trouble with your satphone? Let's troubleshoot.

[Take me there](#)

03. Emergency calls on satphones

A satphone can't provide location access to a 000 operator, as the signal comes from a satellite. Suppose a satphone is your primary means of emergency communication. In that case, we recommend having a source of GPS data with you as well so this information can be provided to the operator.

If your satphone connection is also a smartphone, and you have a plan with internet connectivity, you may be able to use the Australian Government Emergency+ app to notify emergency services.

Advantages and disadvantages of satellite phones

Advantages

- Available to anyone in Australia
- Better coverage and reliability for extremely remote areas
- GPS transmission in emergencies
- Very user-friendly phone calls and texts
- Extra reliable form of emergency contact

Disadvantages

- Slightly delayed voice transmission
- More expensive than a regular phone



- Each network requires a unique handset/hardware
- Severe weather may interrupt service
- Usually larger in size than standard mobile phones

Got questions? We've got answers.

01. Where can I get a satellite phone?

There are many resellers and providers of satphone suppliers and plans. It's worth first looking at Telstra and Optus options and comparing them with other providers. Check for reviews on network reliability, cost, and customer support. These checks are vital to avoid phone issues in a remote area.

- [Telstra](#)
- [Optus](#)

02. How much does a satellite phone cost?

Satphone prices vary, whether you're buying a standalone device or a SatSleeve to use with your smartphone. Standalone satphones or SatSleeves can cost anywhere from \$800 to \$1900. If you choose the SatSleeve, remember that it must be connected to a compatible smartphone (which may come at an extra cost) and needs its own network and plan to function.

Post-paid plans are available on all four phone networks, but pre-paid plans are only available on the Inmarsat and Iridium networks in Australia. You can also rent a Satphone unit as a safety option if you have plans to travel in a remote part of the country.

03. How much does it cost to call and message on a satphone?

A voice call can range from about \$2 to \$5 for a two-minute call, depending on your network and plan. You can also use SMS and internet data over satellite networks – again, costs for these will vary between networks and plans.

Some articles you may find helpful

[See all tech tips](#)

Looking for more information?

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The links below can provide you with a better understanding of satellite phone services. It's important to note that these services are not the same as the USO Satellite service used by Telstra to fulfil its obligation to provide [landline](#) services.

- [Satellite Phone: 5 best sat phones reviewed](#)
- [Satellite Phone Services & Plans Explained](#)

We make sure our values are reflected in our work

Free And Independent Advice

The Regional Tech Hub is funded by the Australian Government, ensuring the advice we provide to you is free. We also remain independent, so the options and information we put forward are all assessed equally.

Regional Support

We believe all Australians, no matter where they live, should be able to access affordable and reliable internet and voice services. Our team are all regionally-based and understand the challenges regional, rural, and remote residents face.

Keeping It Easy

Regional Tech Hub understands the jargon used around connectivity options and issues can be frustrating and confusing. You can relax knowing our resources and advice are accurate, straightforward and practical.

Clear Processes

We offer various contact options and service levels to suit your needs, ensuring you stay informed and on board throughout every step of your connectivity journey. We strive to make every interaction clear, easy and stress-free.

Couldn't find what you were after? Give us a call!

Chat to us on our hotline with one of our team members and let's get the conversation started. If we don't answer, we'll get back to you in no time at all.

[1300 081 029](tel:1300081029)

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