



Retention Periods of Major Cellular Service Providers

Prepared by the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, U.S. Department of Justice, (202) 514-1026, and FBI's Cellular Analysis Survey Team

	Verizon	AT&T	Sprint/Nextel**	T-Mobile
Subscriber Information	Post-paid: 3-5 years*	Depends on length of service	Unlimited	5 years
Call detail records	1 year	Pre-paid: varies Post-paid: 5-7 years	18 mo. (approx.)	Pre-paid: 2 years Post-paid: 5 years
Cell towers used by phone for calls	1 year	From July 2008	18 mo. (approx.) for Sprint CDMA devices; 18-24 months for Nextel iDEN devices	6 months
Text message (SMS) records	1 year	Post-paid: 5-7 years	18 mo. (approx.) for Sprint CDMA devices; not available for Nextel iDEN devices	Pre-paid: 2 years Post-paid: 5 years
Text message (SMS) content	3-5 days (never more than 10)	Not retained	Not retained	Not retained
Cell towers used for SMS transmission	Not retained	1 year	Varies	180 days
Pictures (MMS)	PixPlace only (customer can add or delete pictures any time)	Not retained	Contact provider	Can be stored online. Retained until deleted, or until service is canceled or suspended.
IP session information	1 year	72 hours maximum	18 mo. (approx.)	Not retained
IP source & destination information	90 days	72 hours maximum	6 mo. (approx.)	Not retained
Bill copies (post-paid only)	3-5 years, but only last 12 months readily available *	5-7 years	7 years	Pre-paid: 2 years Post-paid: 5 years
Payment history (post-paid only)	3-5 years, check copies for 6 months*	Depends on length of service	Unlimited	5 years

• May vary by former company.

** For records older than mid-November 2007, Sprint can only provide bill reprints with outgoing info.



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	TracFone	Cricket	MetroPCS	US Cellular
Subscriber Information	2 years	18 months	6 months minimum	7 years
Call detail records	2 years	6 months	6 months	1 year
Cell towers used by phone for calls	Not available	6 months (?)	6 months	1 year
Text message (SMS) records	Not available	Phone-to-phone: Not retained Web-to-phone: 3 mos.	60 days	1 year
Text message (SMS) content	Not available	Phone-to-phone: Not retained Web-to-phone: 3 mos.	60 days	3-5 days
Cell towers used for SMS transmission	Unknown	Not retained	Not retained	Not retained
Pictures (MMS)	Not available	Not retained	Not retained	Unknown
IP session information	30 days	Not retained	Not retained	1 year
IP source & destination information	30 days	Not retained	Not retained	Unknown
Bill copies (post-paid only)	Not available	Unknown	Unknown	7 years
Payment history (post-paid only)	Life of the phone	Unknown	Unknown	1 year