

# Structure of Mobile Phone Numbers in India

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## In brief

Indian mobile numbers are 10 digits long, begin with 6, 7, 8, or 9, and follow the format XXXXX-NNNNN where the first five digits identify the network operator and telecom circle while the last five identify the subscriber.

India has one of the largest mobile phone markets in the world, with over 1.1 billion mobile subscribers as of 2021. With such a vast user base, it's essential to understand the structure and format of Indian mobile phone numbers. This article will provide an in-depth explanation of how mobile numbers are organized in India, including the country code, mobile prefixes, and the National Numbering Plan.

## Country Code and Mobile Number Length

India's country code is +91. When dialing an Indian mobile number from outside India, you need to include this country code before the 10-digit mobile number. All mobile numbers in India are 10 digits long.

## Mobile Number Prefixes

In India, mobile numbers start with either 6, 7, 8, or 9. These prefixes are assigned to different telecom operators and circles across the country. Here's a breakdown of the prefixes:

- 6: Reliance Jio and other operators in some circles
- 7: Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, BSNL/MTNL, and other operators
- 8: Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, BSNL/MTNL, and other operators
- 9: Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, BSNL/MTNL, and other operators

Each telecom circle in India is allowed to have multiple private operators, along with the state-owned BSNL/MTNL. Earlier, there were two private operators plus BSNL/MTNL in each circle for GSM services. This was later expanded to three private operators plus BSNL/MTNL. Currently, each telecom circle has all four major operators: Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, and BSNL/MTNL.

## National Numbering Plan

India follows a National Numbering Plan that defines the structure of mobile numbers. According to this plan, the 10-digit mobile number is split into two parts: XXXXX-NNNNN.

- XXXXX: The first five digits identify the network operator and the telecom circle.
- NNNNN: The last five digits identify the individual subscriber.

This numbering format ensures a standardized structure across all mobile numbers in India, making it easier for users to remember and dial numbers.

## Telecom Circles

India is divided into 22 telecom circles, each representing a specific geographical region. These circles are:

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Assam
3. Bihar
4. Delhi
5. Gujarat
6. Haryana
7. Himachal Pradesh
8. Jammu & Kashmir
9. Karnataka
10. Kerala
11. Kolkata
12. Madhya Pradesh
13. Maharashtra
14. Mumbai
15. North East
16. Orissa
17. Punjab
18. Rajasthan
19. Tamil Nadu
20. Uttar Pradesh (East)
21. Uttar Pradesh (West)
22. West Bengal

Each telecom circle has its own set of mobile number prefixes and operator codes, allowing for efficient call routing and network management.

## **Mobile Number Portability (MNP)**

India introduced Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in 2011, allowing subscribers to switch telecom operators while retaining their existing mobile numbers. This process involves several steps:

1. The subscriber submits a porting request to the desired telecom operator, providing necessary documents and identity proofs.
2. The new operator verifies the documents and approves the porting request.
3. The new operator notifies the current operator about the porting request, initiating the transfer process.
4. The current operator verifies the request and releases the mobile number.
5. The new operator activates the number on its network, allowing the subscriber to use the same number with the new operator's services.

MNP has significantly increased competition among telecom operators, leading to better services and tariff options for consumers.

## **Dialing Indian Mobile Numbers**

When dialing an Indian mobile number from within India, you simply need to enter the 10-digit number, including the prefix. For example, to call a mobile number in Delhi, you would dial: 98XXXXXXXX. If you're dialing an Indian mobile number from outside India, you need to include the country code (+91) before the 10-digit number.

For instance, to call the same Delhi mobile number from the United States, you would dial: +91 98XXXXXXXX. It's important to note that some countries have different exit codes for making international calls. In the United States, the exit code is 011, so you would dial: 011 91 98XXXXXXXX. In the United Kingdom, the exit code is 00, so you would dial: 00 91 98XXXXXXXX.

## Conclusion

Understanding the structure of Indian mobile phone numbers is crucial for effective communication, especially in a country with such a large and diverse mobile subscriber base. By familiarizing yourself with the country code, mobile prefixes, National Numbering Plan, and dialing procedures, you can ensure seamless connectivity with mobile users across India.

As the Indian telecom industry continues to evolve, with the introduction of new technologies like 5G and the expansion of digital services, the importance of mobile numbers will only grow. By staying informed about the numbering system and its intricacies, individuals and businesses can navigate the Indian mobile landscape with ease and confidence.