

Dealing with Text Message Cyberbullying Using Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile

Verizon

Call customer service and ask for one of two options:

Option 1:

Ask to block a specific number (or do it online at the "my Verizon" site). Note that you can block five numbers for free otherwise you need to subscribe to a \$5/month extra feature plan to block more.

Option 2:

Ask to change your phone number. Note that the usual \$15 fee will be waived if you are changing numbers because you have been bullied.

Verizon confirmed that the content of texts is saved for a short time, so a court order should be obtained as soon as possible if you want to retain the text content. Records indicating that texts were sent are retained for one year but can also be found in your monthly bill.

AT&T:

Call customer service and ask for one of two options:

Option 1:

Ask to change your number for no charge.

Option 2:

Ask for the "AT&T Smart Limits" plan (a parental control feature) to be added to your account (for \$5/month per line). This will allow you to block up to 15 numbers as well as set other parental limits such as the number of texts that can be used in a month.

Customer service representatives indicated that text message contents are not saved at all.

T-Mobile:

Call customer service and ask for one of three options:

Option 1:

Ask for text messaging to be deactivated entirely.

Instructions to do this can be found on the T-Mobile site and are pasted below for convenience:

To add Message Blocking, perform the following steps:

1. Go to My T-Mobile and log in. For more information, go to "How do I log in to My T-Mobile?"
2. Select Manage and then select Plans & Services.
3. Select a message blocking feature from the list provided and click the CHANGE SERVICES button.
4. Complete the transaction and Message Blocking will activate.

Option 2:

Customer service representatives indicate that you may use the "family allowance" feature to block certain numbers (and can use "web guard" to limit web usage).

Option 3:

Ask to change your phone number (this process is free once and \$15 each time thereafter).

All indications are that primary account holders can not look up old text messages.