



Volunteer Resources:

Frequently Asked Questions



Cell Phones for Soldiers FAQ Pages

We want to make sure we set you and your team up for success. That's why we have included a thorough FAQ section to make sure all your questions are answered. These questions and answers are also available on our website at <https://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com>. If you have other questions that we have not answered, you can reach out using our website's chatbot in the bottom right hand corner of your web browser, or email us at donations@cellphonesforsoldiers.com.

Drop-Off Location Specific Questions

What responsibilities do drop-off locations have?

Collect donated devices, store them securely, and ship them to us when ready. As a Drop-Off Location, you play a vital role in supporting Cell Phones for Soldiers by providing a convenient and recognizable place in your community for donors to contribute their devices. This helps streamline the donation process and ensures that phones reach our recycling headquarters safely and efficiently. We greatly appreciate your partnership and commitment to helping us connect military members and veterans with their loved ones.

Is Cell Phones for Soldiers a 501(c)(3) organization?

Yes. Please view our 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter on our website, www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com. Cell Phones for Soldiers became a 501(C)(3) Charity Organization on December 14, 2004, Employer Identification Number is 20-1343425, DLN # 17053314031004.

How do I ship one or more cell phones, smartphones, mp3 players, or tablets?

If you're ready to send a donation, be sure to check out our pre-shipping steps on our website at www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/donate - there are specific steps to ship using either self-paid shipping or pre-paid shipping.



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Are there any additional things I need to do before safely shipping?

Yes, there are a few important steps to ensure your donation is shipped safely and in compliance with federal regulations:

1. Print and Attach a Battery Warning Label:

Federal shipping regulations require that every package containing a device with a lithium battery must display a battery warning label on the outside of the box. You can print this label directly from our website at www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/donate.

2. Package Devices Carefully:

To prevent damage during transit, place all phones, smartphones, and devices flat across the bottom of the box or padded envelope. Use newspaper or bubble wrap between layers to cushion and protect the devices. The better the condition of the phones upon arrival, the more value they provide to our troops.

3. Seal and Label Your Package:

Securely seal your package with packing tape. Affix either the correct postage or a prepaid shipping label to ensure your donation reaches us.

Additional Reminders:

- If you are shipping 10 or more devices, you may be eligible for a prepaid shipping label through our website.
- Always double-check that the battery warning label is clearly visible on the outside of each package, as required by federal law.
- For shipments containing lithium batteries, do not exceed the carrier's weight and size limits, and ensure all devices are powered off.

By following these steps, you help guarantee the safe arrival of your donation and maximize its positive impact for military members and veterans. Thank you for your support!

What do I do if I have a problem shipping donated devices?



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Please contact Cell Phones For Soldiers directly at email info@cellphonesforsoldiers.com or call (800) 982-0972.

What can be donated?

- Cell phones (any brand, any condition)
- Smartphones & tablets
- MP3 players, hotspots
- Chargers & accessories (optional)

Please pay special attention to wrapping tablets to ensure their safety during shipping. If you have any questions concerning donations of other electronic items, please contact Cell Phones for Soldiers directly. info@cellphonesforsoldiers.com

What types of phones do you accept for donation?

We accept donations of any and all types of cell phones and smartphones from any carrier. Newer, gently-used mobile devices, including smartphones, are preferred for donation; however, proceeds are generated from the recycling of broken and outdated mobile phones as well. Chargers and accessories are welcome but are not necessary to donate. If you have a charger you would like to donate, please keep the original phone and charger together. Please do not send instruction manuals.

Do the phones/devices have to work?

No! Working and non-working electronics are all accepted.

What should I do before donating?

- Erase personal data
 - Remove SIM and memory cards
 - Turn off Find My iPhone / Google Lock
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How do I erase my personal data before the phone is donated?

To erase your personal data from your cell phone before donating, selling, or recycling it, follow these essential steps:

1. Back Up Your Data

Before erasing anything, back up your important information to the cloud or your computer. This ensures you don't lose contacts, photos, or other critical data.

2. Remove SIM and SD Cards

Take out your SIM card and any external SD memory cards. These may contain personal information and should not be left in the device.

3. Sign Out of Accounts and Remove Personal Info

- On iPhone:
 - Sign out of iCloud, iTunes, App Store, and any other accounts.
 - Unpair devices like Apple Watch.
 - Remove saved passwords and payment information from apps and browsers.
- On Android:
 - Remove your Google account and any manufacturer cloud accounts (like Samsung).
 - Remove payment cards from Google Pay or Samsung Pay.
 - Sign out of other apps and delete saved passwords and browsing history.

4. Perform a Factory Reset

This step erases all personal data and restores your phone to its original settings:

- iPhone:
 - Go to Settings > General > Reset > Erase All Content and Settings.
- Android:
 - Go to Settings > System > Reset Options > Erase all data (factory reset) > Reset phone > Erase everything.



5. Remove Device from Associated Accounts

- For iPhones, visit appleid.apple.com, log in, and remove the device from your Apple ID.
- For Android, log in to your Google account, go to Security > Your Devices, and remove the phone from your account.

6. Physically Inspect the Phone

Double-check that no personal accessories, cards, or information remain.

For detailed, step-by-step instructions (including screenshots) on wiping your data from both iPhone and Android devices, visit:

How to Remove Data From Your iPhone or Android (Compare & Recycle):

<https://www.compareandrecycle.co.uk/blog/how-to-remove-data-from-iphone-android>

What do you do with the donated cell phones?

All donated devices are wiped of personal data and either:

1. **Refurbished and Repurposed:** Many donated devices are carefully refurbished and provided directly to low-income or homeless veterans, helping them stay connected with loved ones and access essential services.
2. **Resold to Support Veterans:** Some devices are refurbished and resold, with all proceeds used to subsidize the cost of entry-level smartphones or unlimited talk, text, and data plans for veterans in need.
3. **Responsibly Recycled:** Devices that cannot be refurbished or repurposed are responsibly recycled, ensuring that valuable materials are recovered, and environmental impact is minimized.

How should I secure my donation box?

- Use a sturdy box or container
- Place it in a visible but monitored area
- Use tape or a lockable lid if needed



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- Empty regularly to prevent overflow or tampering- we recommend securing your box during non-business hours
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What does my donation benefit?

Proceeds from recycled devices fund:

- Prepaid international calling cards
 - Emergency financial support for veterans
 - Cell Phones for Soldiers Mobile Program
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Is my donation tax deductible?

Yes! We have provided a copy of the tax receipt form in your packet. For additional copies, visit www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com to download your tax receipt.

Can I see the impact of my drop-off site?

Yes! Contact us to receive impact reports, such as how many minutes or how many veterans your collected donations helped connect. Email: info@cellphonesforsoldiers.com

Is it safe to donate a phone?

Yes. All devices are securely processed through R2-certified recyclers with strict data protection protocols. This is the highest industry standard in data protection and management.

Can we accept monetary donations at our drop-off site?

We encourage you to direct donors to access our donation portal through our website. Donors can contribute by PayPal or with a debit or credit card this way. If donors would like to contribute by check, please have them make out the check to Cell Phones for Soldiers. Cash and check donations should be promptly mailed to Cell Phones for Soldiers at Cell



Cell Phones for Soldiers, Inc

Phones For Soldiers 220 Center St, Unit 5, Pembroke, MA 02359. Please make sure that you secure all donations prior to shipping.

Questions or shipping help?

Visit our website or email us:

www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com

info@cellphonesforsoldiers.com

How often should I ship collected devices?

Ship devices when you have 10 or more, or as needed. Request a prepaid label for larger shipments.

Can drop-off locations accept accessories?

Yes, but accessories are not required. Please do not accept instruction manuals.

How do we promote our drop-off location?

Cell Phones for Soldiers provides a variety of promotional materials, and your drop-off location will be featured on our Drop-Off Locator to help increase visibility. However, the ultimate success and impact of your collection site depend on your active involvement. To maximize your results, we encourage you to engage with your local community, businesses, and organizations. By spreading the word and building partnerships, you can significantly increase participation and make your cell phone collection campaign a true success.

Who do I contact for support as a drop-off location?

Contact our team through the website or email for assistance.



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Can I get a Donation Receipt for devices collected at my location?

Yes, we provide receipts upon request for devices shipped from your location. Additionally, you can print our Donation Receipt to have available for donors who drop off phones at your site, making it easy for them to document their contributions for tax purposes.

What do I do if I receive a damaged device?

Send all devices—damaged or not—as they still generate proceeds for our programs.

How many Drop-Off Locations does Cell Phones for Soldiers have?

Cell Phones for Soldiers has a nationwide network of over 3,000 Drop-Off Locations across all 50 states, making it easy and convenient for donors to participate. These locations include libraries, police stations, fire departments, postal services, credit unions, and other well-known community sites, ensuring that everyone can find a nearby spot to donate their devices. To locate the most convenient drop-off location, donors can use the interactive map on the Cell Phones for Soldiers website by entering their address or ZIP code. This extensive network helps maximize accessibility and supports the organization's mission to connect military members and veterans with their loved ones.

General Program Questions

What is Cell Phones for Soldiers?

Cell Phones for Soldiers is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to providing free communication services and emergency financial assistance to active-duty military members and veterans. Since its founding in 2004, the organization has delivered more than 450 million minutes of talk time to active duty service members and veterans, funded through the responsible recycling of over 25 million donated cell phones and mobile devices.

Minutes That Matter:



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Through the Minutes That Matter program, Cell Phones for Soldiers has distributed over 8 million prepaid calling cards, enabling deployed service members to stay connected with their loved ones at no cost during times of separation.

Helping Heroes Home:

The Helping Heroes Home program has provided emergency financial assistance to more than 7,500 veterans and their families, helping cover essential needs such as medical bills, mortgage payments, overdue phone and utility bills, and other critical expenses during times of crisis.

Cell Phones for Soldiers Mobile:

Launched in 2024, Cell Phones for Soldiers Mobile extends the organization's mission by providing free smartphones and one year of unlimited talk, text, and data to low-income and homeless veterans. Currently, the program has connected 3,500 veterans, with an ambitious goal of reaching 10,000 veterans by the end of 2025 and 30,000 within the next three years.

By recycling donated devices, Cell Phones for Soldiers not only supports military families but also helps reduce electronic waste and its environmental impact. With every donation, the organization continues to serve as a vital lifeline for America's bravest, ensuring they remain connected to both essential services and their loved ones.

Do you send donated cell phones directly to troops?

No, Cell Phones For Soldiers does not send donated mobile devices directly to deployed troops. There are important reasons for this:

- **Security Risks:** Cell phones can pose significant security risks for service members in combat zones, as calls made on unsecured lines could potentially reveal their locations.
- **High Costs:** International cell phone calls are extremely expensive, making this option impractical for widespread use.

Instead, every donated device is wiped of personal data and processed in one of the following ways:



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- **Refurbished and Repurposed:** Many devices are carefully refurbished and provided to low-income or homeless veterans, helping them stay connected with loved ones and access essential services.
- **Resold to Support Veterans:** Some refurbished devices are sold, with proceeds used to subsidize the cost of entry-level smartphones or unlimited talk, text, and data plans for veterans in need.
- **Responsibly Recycled:** Devices that cannot be refurbished are recycled in an environmentally responsible manner, recovering valuable materials and minimizing environmental impact.

Additionally, proceeds from recycled phones are often used to purchase international calling cards, enabling deployed troops to stay in touch with their families without the risks and high costs associated with direct cell phone use.

Donation Questions for Corporations and Small Businesses

How can my company donate devices in bulk, and does Cell Phones for Soldiers have the capacity to manage large-scale donations?

Cell Phones for Soldiers is fully equipped to handle large-scale, bulk donations from corporations—including pallet-sized and truckload shipments. Companies interested in donating 10 or more devices can take advantage of prepaid shipping options, while even larger donations can be shipped directly to the organization's recycling headquarters. Please contact us at bbergquist@cellphonesforsoldiers.com to coordinate that shipping.

For more details on shipping procedures and to access prepaid shipping labels for bulk donations, please see above shipping requirement FAQ's.

Are there corporate sponsorship opportunities?

Yes, sponsorships start at \$2,500 or 1,000 donated devices. Sponsors receive recognition on our website and in marketing materials and can support through fundraising or services. Please contact us directly at info@cellphonesforsoldiers.com for more information.



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Can we get a tax receipt for our corporate donation?

Yes, all corporate donations are tax-deductible, and Donation Receipts are provided upon request.

Cell Phones for Soldiers became a 501(C)(3) Charity Organization on December 14, 2004, Employer Identification Number is 20-1343425, DLN # 17053314031004.



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