

## Analogue Telephones – Removal and Recycling – A Guide

Telecom Green Ltd staff have been trading and recycling telecommunications equipment since 1998. With the rise of voice over IP equipment, and replacement of large quantities of analogue telephones with “IP” terminals, we have written this short guide relating to their removal and disposal, including answers to frequently asked questions. We are increasingly asked to handle large quantities of used analogue telephones, so have developed some key expertise in collection and disposal.

### *“Are My Used Analogue Phones Worth Anything?”*

How do we break this to you gently? The cost of recovery, refurbishment and remarketing results in a price that is far too close to the cost of a new unit. They are simply not worth remanufacturing. Our experience of resale of the BT Converse range as used units confirms that even the most recent and highly featured phones simply do not sell. A cursory search on eBay will reveal many of the BT Converse series awaiting bids. They don't sell, and yet they are some of the most highly featured phones ever.

### *“Can't they be exported?”*

A good idea, but we have never found a source. If you do, please let us know! Again, the numbers fight against viability. The units do not have sufficient value to justify the cost of export.

### *“So, What Choices Do I Have?”*

Apart from recycling, which will incur a cost, we have a few imaginative solutions:

- *Offer the phones to staff on an individual basis.* As analogue telephones normally work on a standard domestic line, staff could purchase and donate the proceeds to charity. Staff would need to sign a disclaimer that they would dispose of the telephones in an environmentally friendly manner. Local authorities are bound to accept electronic waste from residents free of charge at their recycling centres.
- *Find a member of staff who trades at car boot sales.* They may wish to purchase in bulk in order to trade. Again, the controls on disposal need to be emphasised. Much unfavourable publicity could result from a quantity of phones, all printed with a company logo (!) being found fly-tipped!
- *Donate Small Quantities to charity shops.* Typically, they will only take clean ones without a logo. Some may decline to accept them, in the same way that they are not allowed to trade electrical equipment. Telecom Green Ltd support a number of charities, particularly those involved with transport preservation, and we have made donations to them in the past.

### *“So, What About Recycling?”*

Analogue telephones are difficult to handle, and highly labour-intensive to dismantle.

**Handling:** For bulk recovery from around a building, it is vital that the line cord (which plus into the wall socket) is wrapped around the body of the phone (from left to right) in order to keep the handset and curly cord in place. This sounds trivial, but should line, curly cords, and handsets become tangled, there is significant work involved in untangling, even by snipping the cords. This can double or even treble the work involved in handling.

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We have seen 25-kilo masses of tangled phones, which literally, cannot be moved. Prevention is easy! It simply has to be remembered to be done. Plastic rubble sacks (**not** bin liners!) are ideal for carrying between six and eight phones. PC base and monitor boxes are very useful. More costly, but even better, are large archive boxes, as these can be stacked up to eight high, and can be moved on pallets. *Bin liners should not be used*, as they split after three or four moves. For their value, analogue phones are disproportionately bulky and unwieldy, and are costly to handle.

Recycling. Correct disposal is labour-intensive, and generates some bulky, nil-value waste. Copper cable (cords) need to be separated, then the body (made of ABS) opened, then the circuit board separated from the inside of the ABS body. This sounds simple, but can involve unscrewing up to ten small and fiddly screws per phone. Multiply this by 250 units, and factor in storage and removal of the waste, then it becomes a costly exercise.

Circuit boards and copper cable have a minimal recycling value, and the ABS can be a net cost for disposal, as it is not “clean”, such as the off cuts from a manufacturing process, but may have steel, perspex, or brass insets, or various non-detachable items of non-ABS material. Certain bodies can contain up to thirty types of mixed plastics, which further complicates recycling. Apart from these “challenges”, disposal is straightforward! This begins to explain why disposal is chargeable.

“Skipping” is no longer a legal option, as the new Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) regulations prohibit this, and requires the use of a registered waste carrier and waste management company for processing.

You are always welcome to contact Telecom Green Ltd to discuss your requirements, as we are a registered waste carrier and have particular experience in this activity, as you may gather from this guide! We are always pleased to give advice via [rob.govier@telecomgreen.co.uk](mailto:rob.govier@telecomgreen.co.uk) or 0870 720 0028.

Rob Govier  
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## Tariff – Recycling of Telephones, Fax Machines, Answering Machines

Quantity of Units	Charge per Unit
1 - 19	£2.00
20-49	£1.50
50+	£1.00

**Shipping:** At the shipper's expense – Royal Mail Standard Parcels will charge less than £10.00 for a box of 20 phones. You may have a prior arrangement with a carrier which is more favourable. Collection for large quantities can take place by arrangement at an additional charge.

**Documentation:** Telecom Green Ltd will provide a delivery note and shipping label via e-mail attachment.

**Packaging:** Used PC base and monitor boxes are ideal for quantities of 20 units.

**Terms:** Settlement immediately after shipping.

**Waste Transfer Documentation:** This can be provided as required.

(End.)