Cellular settings in Windows – Microsoft Support

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Windows 11

Some Windows 11 devices have a SIM card or eSIM in them that lets you connect to a cellular data network, so you can get online in more places by using a cellular signal.

If your Windows 11 device doesn’t have a SIM card or eSIM, you can still connect to a cellular network by plugging in an external cellular device (also called a cellular modem or mobile broadband device). Either way, you must have a data plan from a mobile operator to connect.

Connect to a cellular data network for the first time

1. Insert your SIM card into your PC or make sure you already have an eSIM profile installed. For more info, see Use an eSIM to get a cellular data connection on your Windows PC.
2. Select the Network icon on the lower right corner of the taskbar, and then select **Manage Cellular connections** (**>**) for the **Cellular** quick setting. Often, you’ll see the name of your mobile operator under the Cellular quick setting.
3. If **Let Windows keep me connected** is turned on, you'll get connected to cellular data automatically when you're not connected to another type of network, such as Wi-Fi or Ethernet. If it’s turned off, select **Connect**.
4. If prompted, type your user name, password, and the access point name (APN).

If necessary, check the info that might have come with your Windows device, SIM card, or cellular device for more info about what settings to use.

Notes:

- If you select the **Network** icon in the taskbar and the Cellular quick setting is turned off, select it to turn it on. When it's off, the cellular radio is turned off, and you can't connect to a cellular network.
- To learn more about using an eSIM, see Use an eSIM to get a cellular data connection on your Windows PC.

Use Cellular settings for connection issues

If your cellular data connection is working correctly, you shouldn't need to change the cellular settings. However, if you're having cellular connection problems, changing one or more settings may help.

The following is a list of key Cellular settings that you can use to try and fix cellular connection problems. Settings vary by Windows 11 device model and mobile operator.

Setting	Does this
Use this SIM for cellular data	Determines which SIM slot to use for your cellular connection—physical SIM card slot or your eSIM. You can choose the cellular network connection to use for cellular data. For example, you might use one profile for work and a different one for personal use. Or you might choose a different profile if you're traveling to a new country.This setting only appears on Windows 11 devices that have both a SIM and an eSIM. For more about using an eSIM, see Use an eSIM to get a cellular data connection on your Windows PC. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Use this SIM for cellular data**.
Let Windows keep me connected	Determines if your Windows 11 device will automatically connect to the cellular data network when it's available. Turn it off if you want to manually connect each time you want to use your cellular data connection. Turn it on if you want Windows to manage the connection for you. When it's on, you'll connect to cellular data automatically when you're not connected to another kind of network. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Let Windows keep me connected**.

Metered connection	A metered connection is an internet connection that has a data limit associated with it. By default, cellular data connections are set as metered. Some apps might work differently on a metered connection to help reduce your data usage. Also, some updates for Windows won't be installed automatically. If you set a data limit in Data usage settings for your cellular data connection, Windows can help you stay under your data limit and set the metered connection setting for you. For more info about how to set a data limit, see Set your data limit. If you can't change the metered connection setting and want to, see Metered connections in Windows. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Metered connection**.
Data roaming options	Determines if your cellular data connection stays on when your Windows 11 device is outside your mobile operator's network. To help prevent data roaming charges, you can selecting **Don't roam**. If you do allow roaming, you can use cellular data when your Windows device is in a roaming area. Depending on your data plan, you might pay more for data you use when roaming. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Data roaming options**.
Use cellular whenever Wi-Fi is poor	Sometimes you might be connected to a slower Wi-Fi network, or you might be in an area where using cellular data would be faster than Wi-Fi. Turn this on if you want Windows to connect you to cellular in these circumstances. If it is turned off, Windows will use cellular only when Wi-Fi is not available. When cellular data is used, it will use data from your data plan and you may incur charges. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** >**Use cellular whenever Wi-Fi is poor**.

Choose apps that can use your cellular data	To help control your data usage, you can choose which apps can or can’t use cellular data. For example, if you have an app that uses a lot of data, but you don’t use it often when you’re on the go, you might not want that app to use cellular data. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Cellular data and apps** > **Choose apps that can use your cellular data**. On the Cellular data screen, do one or more of the following: If you don’t want any apps to be allowed to use cellular data, turn off **Let apps use my cellular data**. Apps won’t be allowed to use cellular data. They’ll only send and receive data when you’re connected to another kind of network.If you don’t want a specific app to use cellular data, find the app under **Choose apps that can use your cellular data**, and then turn off cellular data for that app.**Note:** The Windows Subsystem for Android™, the Amazon Appstore, and any installed apps might still use cellular data even if they aren’t listed on the above Settings page for Cellular data and apps.
Cellular network selection	Appears when roaming and determines which cellular network connection is used. The default setting is Automatic. If you try to connect to a cellular network and see a message that the selected network isn't available, you can choose **Search**, and then select another cellular network. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings**.
Active network	Displays the name of the cellular network that you’re using. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings** > **Active network**.

APN settings	The internet access point name (APN) is the address your Windows 11 device uses to connect to the internet when using your cellular data connection. Usually, the internet APN is set automatically. If your cellular data connection isn't working and you can't connect to the Internet, type a new internet APN based on your location and mobile operator. If you can connect to a Wi Fi network on your Windows 11 device or have a phone handy, try searching online to find the internet APN settings for your mobile operator. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings** > **Add APN**.Next, do one or more of the following: In the **Profile name**box, type a name for the APN profile.In the **APN** box, type the address for the APN to use.In the **User name** box, type the user name for your mobile account.In the **Password** box, type the password for your mobile account.Select **Type of sign-in info**, and then select the authentication method that's used.Select **IP type**, and then select the type of IP address to use.Select **APN type**, and then select **Internet**.Select the **Apply this profile**check box if you want the APN profile to be used right after you save it.Select **Save** > **OK**.
Properties	This displays information about your SIM and cellular data connection. For example, you can find your IMEI number here. Select **Copy** to copy the information to paste into an email or elsewhere. This can be helpful if you're having connection problems and need to send information to your mobile operator or support person. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings**.
Use SIM PIN	Determines if you want to use a PIN for the SIM in your Windows 11 device to help prevent other people from using the cellular data connection when they're not authorized. After you've set up your SIM PIN, you'll be prompted to type the SIM PIN when you try to connect. When prompted, type your SIM PIN. If this is the first time using it, type the default SIM PIN. If you don't know the default SIM PIN, visit your mobile operator's website to see if they list it there. You must restart your Windows 11 device for your cellular data connection to be locked with a SIM PIN. If you've already set up a PIN for the SIM, type your SIM PIN when prompted, and then select **OK**. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings** > **Use SIM PIN**under **Security**.

Remove SIM PIN	This appears when you're using a SIM PIN. If you’re using a SIM PIN and decide you don’t want to use a PIN anymore, select **Remove SIM PIN**, type your current SIM PIN, and then select **OK**. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings** > **Remove SIM PIN** under **Security**.
Change SIM PIN	This appears if you're using a SIM PIN. To change your SIM PIN if you’re using one, select **Change SIM PIN**, type your current SIM PIN in the **Current SIM PIN** box, type a new SIM PIN in the **New SIM PIN** box, type the same new SIM PIN in the **Confirm new SIM PIN** box, and then select **OK**. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings** > **Change SIM PIN** under Security.
Unblock SIM PIN	This appears if you're using a SIM PIN and the incorrect PIN was entered three times. When this happens, the SIM will be blocked and can't be used until you unblock it. To unblock it, you’ll need to contact your mobile operator for the PIN Unblocking Key (PUK) code. Next, select **Unblock SIM PIN**, and then type the PUK code. If an incorrect PUK code is entered too many times, your SIM card will be permanently blocked, and you'll need to get a new SIM card from your mobile operator. To find this setting, select the **Start** button, then enter **settings**. Select **Settings** > **Network & internet** > **Cellular** > **Mobile operator settings** > **Unblock SIM PIN** under **Security**.