

# Speech to Speech Relay

For people with speech disabilities  
who have difficulty being  
understood on the telephone



# What Is Speech-to-Speech?

Speech-to-speech (STS) is a free relay service that allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the telephone to communicate using his or her own voice or voice synthesizer.

A specially trained STS communications assistant revoices your words so that the other person on the call can understand them, and the other person speaks directly to you.



## Who Can Benefit From Using STS?

If you have:

- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
- Cerebral Palsy
- Huntington's Disease
- A Laryngectomy
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Parkinson's Disease
- Stroke Complications
- Stuttered Speech
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Other conditions affecting clarity of speech.

Also, if you use a voice synthesizer or enhancer, soundboard, or other augmentative and alternative communication device, you may be able to benefit from STS.

## What Else Should I Know About STS?

There are a number of features that can help make your STS calls go smoother.

1. You may request a male or female communications assistant, and as long as one is available your request will be honored.
2. You or the person you are calling may request that the communications assistant remain in the background and only begin repeating if requested by either party. This is helpful when calling friends, family or others who are familiar with your speech.
3. The communications assistant will repeat what you say every three or four words. It is helpful if you pause while the communications assistant is speaking.
4. You may take all the time you need to complete your call.



## How Does STS Work?

You can watch a video about how STS works on our website at [www.mnrelay.org](http://www.mnrelay.org).

1. To place a STS call you can either:
  - Dial the direct STS relay toll-free number: 1-877-627-3848.
  - Dial 7-1-1 and tell the relay communications assistant that you want to make a Speech-to-Speech call.
2. When the relay center answers, you will hear “Minnesota Relay Speech-to-Speech, CA XXXX. May I have the number that you are calling please?”
3. Give the communications assistant the area code and telephone number of the person you wish to call.
4. Tell the communications assistant any special instructions that you have, such as:
  - Repeat everything I say.
  - Repeat only if I am not understood.
  - Leave the following message on the called party’s answering machine.
  - If you know you are calling an automated system that requires you to select from a number of options, let the communications assistant know which options you would like before the call is placed.
5. The communications assistant will verify the telephone number with you before dialing, and will explain STS to the person you are calling (if necessary).
6. Once the call is connected, everyone on the call will be able to hear each other.

7. Speak directly to the person you are calling.
8. The communications assistant will repeat exactly what you say so that the other person understands. The communications assistant may ask you to repeat what you said so that it is correctly communicated.
9. Say “go ahead” or “GA” when you have finished speaking and are ready for a response.
10. The person you called speaks directly to you.

You can also receive calls through STS relay. The person calling you would dial 7-1-1 and ask for Speech-to-Speech, or dial 1-877-627-3848 (the direct STS toll-free number), and then provide the STS communications assistant with your telephone number.

STS communications assistants are specially trained to understand a wide variety of different speech patterns, and to be patient while processing calls. The communications assistant is not part of the call; her/his job is only to repeat what the STS user says.







### Customer Profile

You can complete a customer profile to customize your STS calls by submitting your call preferences, such as:

- Up to 30 speed dial numbers
- Emergency contacts
- If you would like the communications assistant to repeat everything you say, or to only repeat upon request.



### STS Customer Service

Dedicated customer services staff is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist STS users with filling out a customer profile.

Customer service can also provide information to STS users, and organizations serving STS users, on how to place and receive STS calls, and on features designed to support STS users and their callers.

Voice: 1-877-787-1989

Email: [Sprint.TRSCustServ@sprint.com](mailto:Sprint.TRSCustServ@sprint.com)



### Saved Messages

If you dictate a message to leave on a voicemail or answering machine and then get a busy signal, you can ask the STS communications assistant to copy the message into your customer profile. When you want to try the call again, redial STS and ask the communications assistant to retrieve the saved message.

After 24 hours, the message copied into your profile is automatically deleted from the system.



### Email Set-up

You can email call instructions or information to STS relay 2 to 24 hours prior to your call. This can include information such as the number to be dialed, the name of the person being called, the subject of the call, special instructions, or anything that makes it easier for you to complete your call (such as prescription or account numbers). Before you use Email Set-Up for the first time, you must call STS Customer Service to complete a customer profile and to receive instructions.



### My Name and My Places

You can register your name via your customer profile so people who call you can simply dial the STS relay direct number and ask for you by name – without having to provide your telephone number.

You also have the ability to register multiple telephone numbers and hours of availability for yourself. When someone calls you through STS relay, the communications assistant will reference your customer profile to view your registered phone numbers. Different numbers can be added for certain times of the day and days of the week.

## Is There Any Special Equipment Needed To Use STS?

No special telephone equipment is needed to use STS relay, though some may find it beneficial to use a speakerphone, hands-free telephone, headset with a microphone, or other equipment.



## What If I Can't Afford Specialized Equipment?

If you meet certain eligibility requirements, you may qualify to receive telecommunications equipment at no cost through the Minnesota Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program.

A TED Program specialist will assess your needs, have you try different types of phone equipment, and then provide you with the type of equipment that best meets your needs.

### To learn more about the TED Program:

Website: [mn.gov/dhs](http://mn.gov/dhs) – search for “TED Program”

Voice: 1-800-657-3663

TTY: 1-888-206-6555

## What If I Can't Afford Telephone or Internet Service?

The federal Lifeline and state Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) programs provide monthly discounts on landline or wireless telephone service, or on internet (broadband) service, for eligible low-income customers. Additional Lifeline discounts are available to low-income residents who live on tribal lands. Only one Lifeline/TAP service discount is allowed per household.

### To learn more about Lifeline and TAP:

Website: [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc) - search for “telephone assistance”

Voice: 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782

Email: [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)

## How Do I File a STS Compliment or Complaint?

If you would like to file a compliment or complaint regarding STS, we ask that you provide the date and time of the relay call, the calling to and from telephone numbers, the communications assistant's identification number, and the nature of your compliment or complaint.

### You may file a compliment/complaint two ways:

- With Minnesota Relay  
Email: [mn.relay@state.mn.us](mailto:mn.relay@state.mn.us)  
Phone: 1-800-657-3775
- With the Federal Communications Commission  
Online: [www.fcc.gov/complaints](http://www.fcc.gov/complaints)  
Phone: 1-888-225-5322

## To learn more about Speech-to-Speech relay and other Minnesota Relay services:

Website: [www.mnrelay.org](http://www.mnrelay.org)

STS Customer Service: 1-877-787-1989

Email: [Sprint.TRSCustServ@sprint.com](mailto:Sprint.TRSCustServ@sprint.com)

