

Mobile Bills Could Cause ‘Unpleasant Shock’ For Tourists

With Britain seeing a wave of unseasonable weather over what is alleged to have been the summer months, it is perhaps unsurprising that an increasing number of Britons are looking to take a foreign holiday this autumn in the search for some sun.

September 15, 2007 (FPRC) -- Citing research carried out by Directline Holiday, international mobile phone operator AwayPhone has reported a 150 per cent rise in summer holiday bookings over the course of this year. Meanwhile, figures released by the Daily Telegraph have revealed that one in four people claim to be more likely to go on a foreign holiday next year, mainly due to the poor British weather. However, holidaymakers have been warned that going away could leave them with heightened pressures on day-to-day spending upon their return home, such as paying off personal loans and credit cards.

According to AwayPhone, despite moves made by the European Commission this month to impose limits on mobile costs, those who use their phone while in the European Union (EU) will still pay “considerably more” than if they make calls while at home. Meanwhile, the mobile phone operator stated that for tourists travelling outside the EU, there are no restrictions on how much they could be charged, which consequently could see such holidaymakers facing increased debt difficulties.

Sherry Madera, chief executive of the company, said: “There is no denying that this summer’s poor weather has encouraged many more people than usual to travel abroad to seek the sunshine - and it seems likely that a lot will take last minute autumn breaks. However, their enjoyment of their holiday could be severely compromised by the unpleasant shock of their phone bill when they arrive home.”

As a result, the company is urging tourists to check their current tariff with their mobile operator before leaving Britain, which could allow them to switch to a more competitive deal if needs be. Highlighting the financial difficulties mobile calls made abroad can incur, AwayPhone reported that a ten-minute call made to Britain from Turkey will set tourists back an average of £14.74. Meanwhile, Morocco was revealed to have “very high roaming rates”, as a ten-minute mobile conversation costs a typical £15.94.

“Although the EU ruling is moving mobile phone costs in the right direction, making phone calls when overseas can be very expensive. Not only that but operators can still charge what they want for any country outside Europe. We are advising people not to be complacent - it is worth checking how much it will cost to use a mobile while they are away before getting on the plane, rather than having a huge bill on their return,” Ms Madera added.

Meanwhile, research released by Equifax earlier this year suggested that households could be furthering their debt difficulties as a result of financing holidays ineffectively. According to the credit reference agency, 51 per cent of those planning to go away are set to fund such a break by borrowing money, whether this is via a credit card or loan. However, with just over a quarter of respondents (29 per cent) stating that it will take them up to three years to complete making repayments, external affairs director Neil Munroe reported that by constantly having “a high level of credit outstanding”, consumers could end up damaging their financial histories which in turn could impinge on their access to cheap loans in the future.

As a result Mr Munroe claimed that tourists should take the time to make sure that they are choosing the most competitively-priced financial deal to fund their break. He added that consumers should also look to get a copy of their financial history which can allow them to identify any discrepancies on their file, which in turn could help them get a cheaper rate of interest on future loans. Findings from the company also showed that the typical consumer goes away four times ever year, as the average family holiday costs 2,000 pounds.

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