

3 MYTHS ABOUT USING PUBLIC CHARGING STATIONS

The truth about using public charging stations to charge your phone or tablet

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As we grow increasingly dependent on our mobile devices, public charging stations are popping up at airports, transport stations, corporate and educational campuses, healthcare facilities, recreational venues, restaurants and bars across the country.



MYTH 1: YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID TO USE A PUBLIC CHARGING PORT.

Let's start by defining a public charging station as any pedestal, wall receptacle, or in-furniture outlet — typically found under a counter, table top or chair — that contains a USB port for charging cell phones and tablets.

When that dreaded “low battery” alert appears, most individuals are relieved to find a lifeline for their cell phones. But that same public charging station causes other individuals to question,

“If I plug in my cell phone to that USB port, can someone steal my personal information?”

THE ANSWER IS NO

To help put your mind at ease, I'll explain how charging stations are designed to keep your personal and private information secure.



MYTH 2: YOUR PHONE CAN BE HACKED.

DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

USB charging ports must be designed, tested and certified to meet the specifications outlined by the USB Implementers Forum, which is comprised of the creators of USB technology. The USB Battery Charging Specification Revision 1.2 states that dedicated charging ports that output power through a USB connector cannot be capable of detecting, identifying or communicating with a downstream device to which it has been connected. To comply with this mandate, manufacturers short the data pins in the USB connector. Information cannot be transmitted or received when a device is plugged into a charging station.

NO INFORMATION CAN BE TRANSMITTED

MYTH 3: CHARGING PORTS ARE CONNECTED TO A/V AND DATA INFRASTRUCTURE.

It is also important to note that charging stations are part of the electrical infrastructure, just like a traditional wall receptacle. It is powered by 110 volts and contains a transformer that steps down the power to five volts for safe, efficient mobile charging. Because the charging station is part of the electrical system — and not the A/V or data infrastructure — it does not contain network connections or storage servers that would allow information to be recorded or sent to another device.

In other words, the USB port can't read data from your phone — and even if it could, the charging station doesn't have the technology to process or transmit it to a third-party.

THE USB PORT CAN'T READ DATA

So the next time your phone is running low, you can plug into a public charging station with confidence that your data is safe and secure.

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