

FAQ The Sunset of 3G

Mobile providers (wireless carriers) are preparing to shut down, phase out or retire their 3G networks. To avoid losing service, many devices may need to be upgraded. For more information on your mobile providers' plans for 3G retirement and how you can prepare, contact your mobile provider directly.

? What is happening?

For the availability of more advanced network services, such as 5G, mobile providers (wireless carriers) are shutting down their 3G networks which rely on outdated technology. As a result, many older cell phones and wireless devices will be unable to make or receive calls and texts—including to 911—or connect to data services. In addition to this change affecting 3G mobile phones and wireless devices, certain 4G mobile phones and wireless devices that do not support Voice over Long-Term Evolution (VoLTE) or high-definition (HD) voice will also be impacted.

? When is it happening?

Timing to phase out 3G services will vary by mobile provider (wireless carrier) and may change at their discretion. Consult your mobile provider's website or contact your mobile provider directly for current information.

- [AT&T](#) announced that it will completely retire its 3G network by February 2022.*
- [T-Mobile](#) announced that it will completely retire Sprint's 3G Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) network by March 31, 2022, and Sprint's 4G LTE network by June 30, 2022. T-Mobile also announced it will shut down T-Mobile's 3G Universal Mobile Telecommunications Service (UMTS) network by July 1, 2022; however, a retirement date for its 2G network has not been announced.*
- [Verizon](#) announced that will completely retire its 3G network by December 31, 2022.*

Many carriers, such as Boost, Cricket, Straight Talk, and several Lifeline mobile service providers utilize AT&T's, T-Mobile's, and Verizon's networks. If your mobile carrier is not listed, you may still be affected.

**These dates are targets for completing the 3G shutdown. Carriers may begin retiring parts of their networks sooner than the dates provided.*

? What do I need to do?

Consult your mobile provider's website or contact your mobile provider directly for more information about their 3G retirement plan, and whether your phone, or other connected device, may be affected. It is important to plan ahead to avoid the loss of connectivity and the ability to contact 911.

Many mobile provider (wireless carrier) websites provide lists of devices that will no longer be supported after their 3G networks are retired. You may need to upgrade to a newer device to ensure that you can stay connected. Mobile providers may offer a discount, promotion or waive other upgrade costs to help consumers needing to replace their phones.

If your mobile phone or wireless device was purchased independent of a mobile provider, you may be able to check whether your device is 4G LTE-enabled (with VoLTE or HD Voice) by checking the device settings, user manual, or by searching the model number on the manufacturer's website. For some devices, a software update may enable VoLTE (HD Voice) or other advanced services, while others will require replacement by purchasing a new device.

? Does this change impact phones only?

No. In addition to mobile phones and wireless devices, other electronics, such as certain medical devices, tablets, smart watches, vehicle automatic crash response (ACR)/SOS services, home security systems, and other wirelessly connected products which may be using 3G network services. Additionally, devices that use cellular connectivity as a back-up—when a wired internet connection fails—will also be impacted. If the device is not labeled, contact the monitoring company or other service provider to confirm how the device connects and whether your device will be affected.

? Why are 3G networks being phased out?

As mobile providers (wireless carriers) seek to upgrade their networks to take advantage of the latest technologies, they periodically shut down outdated services to free up spectrum and infrastructure to support new services, such as 5G. Similar to when some mobile providers retired their 2G networks when they upgrading to 4G services. Mobile providers have the flexibility to choose the types of technologies and services they deploy, including when they decommission older services in favor of newer solutions.

Additional resources to stay connected

Mobile providers (wireless carriers) may offer a discount, promotion or waive other upgrade costs to help consumers needing to replace their phones.

Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has programs which may be able to assist eligible consumers with the cost of phone or internet services:

- The FCC's Lifeline program provides a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income consumers to ensure that all Americans have the opportunities and security that phone service brings, including being able to connect to jobs, family, and emergency services. You can learn more about the Lifeline Program and find out if you may be eligible [here](#).
- The FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program provides a temporary discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband (internet) service for eligible households during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can learn more about the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, what it covers, and find out if you may be eligible [here](#).
- To learn more about 5G, visit the FCC's [FAQs page](#).
- For more on the FCC's 5G strategy, visit the FCC's [America's 5G Future](#).