

Get the facts about public safety communications.

FAQs

Our customers are hearing a lot about the FirstNet® network being developed by AT&T, but as often happens, there's a mix of facts, opinions and confusing claims. We want to address some of the most common questions we are hearing, and provide answers you can count on.

Is AT&T's public safety core better than Verizon's?

Simply put, no. Both public safety cores from Verizon and AT&T were built to support the needs of public safety. Choice is important, so customers can choose which provider will give the coverage they need. Verizon has created the dedicated Verizon Responder Private Core, which uses the latest network technologies and is built on America's largest and most reliable 4G LTE network. With the Responder Private Core, Verizon's public safety customers will continue to receive best-in-class communications that meet the specific needs of public safety agencies. Plus, we offer enhanced priority and preemption services to qualifying public safety customers at no additional charge.

Is there really a "fifth wireless network" dedicated to public safety?

Not really. Band 14 is a 20 MHz slice of radio spectrum in the 700 MHz Band. Congress allocated Band 14 to public safety and authorized FirstNet to use it to support its deployment of a nationwide public-safety broadband network. FirstNet has leased Band 14 to AT&T, enabling AT&T to use it to serve all of its commercial customers, though priority must be given to public safety customers.

Like AT&T, Verizon has priority services that enable us to give access to public safety first, and preemption capabilities for the moments that matter most. Verizon's leading nationwide 4G LTE network uses Band 13. Bands 13 and 14 are adjacent in the 700 MHz Band and have the same favorable technical characteristics that support wireless broadband operations.

But it's important to note that in practice, neither Band 13 nor 14 is used exclusively for public safety. That means user experiences will vary depending on the carrier and the network that carrier has built. For instance, to enhance the capacity and experience provided by Band 13, Verizon has built out its 4G LTE network with advanced technologies that allow the same band of spectrum to carry more traffic, more efficiently. Bottom line: When evaluating support for public safety communications, it's important to focus on the network as a whole – and that network needs to prioritize first responders.

Do all public safety agencies need to operate on the same band of the wireless spectrum?

No. With network interoperability, public safety data will be able to travel across any band in any wireless spectrum. Verizon has already deployed its 4G LTE network across the U.S. and has a 450,000-square-mile advantage over its closest competitor. We support network, system, application and device interoperability across FirstNet and all commercial carriers.

Interoperability is a must if you want a vibrant ecosystem of apps where any responder can access any app. Effective collaboration among public safety officials is critical to help ensure quick and efficient response. That level of collaboration is not possible without seamless and interoperable communication. Additionally, interoperability between networks can provide a failover option in case there's a service outage or failure on one of the networks.

Does it create a bigger security risk to allow public safety traffic to interoperate with other wireless networks?

Not necessarily. Network security is a top concern for network providers, and it's up to each provider to build in security measures that help protect your voice and data communications. For example, our Private Network service lets you bypass the conditions of the public network with a direct network connection for greater security and performance.

And our professional services teams, backed by years of security experience, help our customers identify and resolve security risks within their network infrastructure.

Why is Verizon using network virtualization?

Verizon is a leader in network innovation, and virtualized, software-defined networks (SDNs) are the latest technologies we are using to build out our Responder Private Core, which is part of our award-winning 4G LTE network design and intelligently manages traffic between commercial and public safety customers. SDNs have several advantages over traditional architectures, including the ability to deploy rapidly, to scale easily and to offer improved security. They also protect your investment in technology, because they are future-ready. We believe that investing in advanced technologies will provide the greatest long-term benefit to our customers, and enable them to fully leverage America's largest and most reliable 4G LTE network.

AT&T claims to have offered preemption first. Is that true?

Verizon and AT&T began offering preemption services in the same week, so it really doesn't matter who offered it first. What matters is how the underlying network performs. The preemption feature is only used when users overload the network, providing public safety the assurance that it will be served first. Today, Verizon offers priority and preemption on our 4G LTE network, meaning you can rest assured they'll consistently meet the needs of public safety because they're running on the network with the best coverage and reliability.

How is Verizon working to improve the way public safety agencies operate in the future?

Verizon is a leader in wireless innovation and we will continue to bring that innovation to address the challenges that public safety agencies and first responders face every day. Through our Smart Communities and Safe Cities solutions and programs, we're partnering with local governments to help improve the services they provide to citizens. Additionally, we're developing wireless network innovations—such as drone-deployed LTE service—to expand coverage and provide network continuity following a disaster. We're preparing for tomorrow's even faster and more powerful networks, including 5G technology, which will take first-responder communications technologies to a new level. And we'll continue to provide leading services as open and nonproprietary, which means your first responders can communicate with any other responders and your agency can collaborate with other agencies.

Does Verizon provide additional support during emergencies and other situations?

Yes. We have more than 40 dedicated crisis response teams nationwide that provide coordinated action and support during natural disasters and emergencies—to both Verizon and non-Verizon customers. We've strategically placed assets, including our Mobile Connectivity Trailers, mobile command centers, Cells on Wheels (COWs), Cells on Light Trucks (COLTs) and more, that are ready to deploy during special events, natural disasters or other emergencies. You can reach our Verizon Response Team at 800.981.9558.

Why should I choose Verizon for public safety communications?

The network matters, especially when it comes to public safety. The difference between FirstNet and our solution is the network, so in making your choice you should consider these facts:

- Verizon has the nation's largest and most reliable 4G LTE network, and has been ranked #1 nationwide by RootMetrics in overall network performance 11 times in a row¹
- We have deep roots with the first-responder community and decades of experience working with public safety agencies, with the best nationwide wireless network, dedicated local support teams and 24/7/365 service
- We've invested more than \$126 billion in network infrastructure since 2000, and continue to invest billions more each year to expand and improve our network
- We're a global leader in the development and deployment of 5G technology. We're uniquely positioned to build a 5G Ultra Wideband network due to our portfolio of millimeter-wave spectrum and investment and buildout of fiber to support 5G. 5G will enable data speeds significantly faster than today's wireless networks, creating opportunities for never-before-possible lifesaving applications for public safety

Learn more:

To learn more about how the Verizon network and our Response Ready solutions—like our Responder Private Core, mobile broadband priority and preemption—can support your agency's mission-critical wireless communication needs, visit verizon.com/publicsafety or contact your Verizon Wireless government account manager.

¹ Rankings based on the RootMetrics® U.S. National RootScore® Report: 2H 2018. Tested with best commercially available smartphones on four national mobile networks across all available network types. Your experiences may vary. The RootMetrics award is not an endorsement of Verizon. Visit www.rootmetrics.com for more details.