

STIR/SHAKEN FAQ

FAQ

FAQs about STIR/SHAKEN call authentication

Q. What is STIR/SHAKEN?

- A. Secure Telephony Identity Revisited/Secure Handling of Asserted information using toKENS (STIR/SHAKEN) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC)-mandated, carrier-based telecom industry solution that uses digital signatures to authenticate the origin of phone calls. Its purpose is to increase trust that the information on a caller ID display is the actual originating party.

Q. What is the underlying problem and how does STIR/SHAKEN solve it?

- A. The volume of fraudulent, spam, spoofed and unwanted robocalls has eroded trust in voice calls to the point that, by some estimates, more than half of all calls are not being answered.

That's an untenable situation for businesses, customers and carriers alike.

STIR/SHAKEN addresses the problem by requiring carriers to "sign" calls they originate, preventing spoofed caller ID data and guaranteeing that the caller ID information that appears on phones is trustworthy. If users can trust the caller ID data, they can make better decisions about whether to pick up when the phone rings.

Q. What does "STIR/SHAKEN" stand for?

- A. Secure Telephony Identity Revisited/Secure Handling of Asserted information using toKENS.

Q. How does STIR/SHAKEN stop illegal robocalls?

- A. STIR/SHAKEN uses public key cryptography and digital certificates to authenticate phone calls, similar to the way that e-commerce websites secure their traffic. Originating carriers digitally sign their calls, and terminating carriers check to see that the signatures are authentic before completing the call.

Q. Will STIR/SHAKEN allow legitimate robocalls, such as school closings, reverse 911 calls or utility outage advisories?

- A. As long as robocalls are signed and authenticated by their carriers, they will be completed.

Q. When is STIR/SHAKEN scheduled to be deployed?

- A. Verizon will roll out STIR/SHAKEN solutions across its multiple product lines beginning in 4Q2020.

Q. Will all carriers be required to use STIR/SHAKEN?

- A. Yes.

Q. How will STIR/SHAKEN look to consumers?

- A. Consumers should not notice any functional change to calls being delivered.

Q. What is Verizon's role in the FCC mandate?

- A. Verizon sits on the board of the STIR/SHAKEN governance group, helping to establish policy and regulatory frameworks, to build standards and testing protocols, and to select certificate authorities. We are also investing in our network infrastructure to add capabilities to inbound and outbound calling.

Q. Has any action already been taken to reduce robocalling and spoofing?

- A. Yes. Verizon has implemented STIR/SHAKEN in several products. Starting in 2019, Verizon SPAM Alert and Verizon Call Filter have identified suspected spam calls in caller ID displays. In addition, Verizon supports legislation including the federal Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act and the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act to strengthen enforcement against illegal robocallers.

Q. Does STIR/SHAKEN mean that users will be able to trust the content of the calls they receive?

- A. STIR/SHAKEN authenticates the originating phone number, ensures that the caller is authorized to use that number and validates that the call's recipient can call that number back. It does not guarantee that the callers themselves can be trusted. Authenticating the reliability of the caller—not just the calling number—may be a future feature of STIR/SHAKEN.

Q. Who will manage the digital signature and encryption/decryption processes required to make STIR/SHAKEN work in the U.S. and Canada?

- A. Governance policy administrators, telephone service providers and certificate authorities will be designated to fulfill those roles.

Q. Will Verizon allow enterprises to self-attest STIR/SHAKEN tokens or will that be solely a carrier-based function?

- A. There are no current plans to allow enterprises to self-attest; we will reevaluate the possibility as the market matures.

Q. How will international calls be handled?

- A. Although markets outside the U.S. are interested in implementing STIR/SHAKEN, there are no current plans for them to do so. International calls, therefore, would be either unsigned or carry a low attestation value.

Q. What can originating callers do if their legitimate calls fail authentication?

- A. Report erroneous call blocking, categorization errors and incorrect call tagging to voicespamfeedback.com and spamalert.verizon.com.

Learn more:

enterprise.verizon.com/products/customer-experience-services/transport-and-intelligent-routing/ip-contact-center/stir-shaken-caller-id-authentication/