

Canada: Outage leaves many without mobile, internet service

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A widespread network outage from Rogers Communications Inc. left many Canadian customers without mobile and internet service Friday and caused problems for police, courthouses, passport offices and other facilities.

A notice on the Toronto-based [telecommunications company](#)'s website said the [outage](#) is impacting both its wireless and home service customers and is also affecting phone and chat support.

"Our technical teams are working hard to restore services as quickly as possible," Rogers spokesperson Zac Carreiro said in an email.

The outage disrupted services across retailers, courthouses, airlines, train networks, credit card processors and [police forces](#), pushing many to delay business transactions, serve customers through analog means or even flock to [coffee shops](#) where they could find Wi-Fi.

Toronto's Go Transit said in a tweet that some parts of its system were affected by the outage and fares cannot be purchased using debit or [credit cards](#). E-tickets may also be unavailable, it warned.

Among the most serious impacts were warnings from police in Toronto and Ottawa, who reported connection problems when Canadians called 911.

"If your call fails, please try again, or call from a landline or cellphone with another provider," Ottawa Police said on Twitter.

Scarborough Health Network, which operates three hospitals and eight satellite sites in Toronto, requested physicians and staff to head to their workplaces for any shifts that they are scheduled to be on-call for until the disruption is resolved.

In Quebec, some court matters were hampered. Peter Nygard's Montreal court appearance on sex-related charges was put off because the fashion mogul, who is detained in a Toronto jail, couldn't connect by video conference. His bail hearing will now take place next week.

Service Canada tweeted it too was impacted by outage with [call centers](#) and offices, including ones that issue passports, affected.

The outage stands to exacerbate passport delays that have left Canadians lined up outside Service Canada offices for lengthy periods of time as the government works through a backlog.

Many retailers and businesses were also facing trouble when trying to accept payments because Interac, which processes electronic financial transactions, said its online and checkout debit offerings and e-transfer services were impacted.

As a result, the Confederation Bridge, which links the provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, was unable to accept debit Friday morning. Canada's Wonderland in Vaughan, Ont. said amusement park goers could only pay with credit card. They were told on Facebook they must be able to access e-tickets on their phone or bring printed tickets to the park, if visiting Friday.

Downdetector, a website that tracks outages, showed people started reporting problems with Rogers' service around 4:30 a.m. EDT and by 7 a.m. 20,000 reports had been logged.

The country's telecom sector is dominated by three large carriers—Rogers, BCE Inc. and Telus Corp.—and their hold on the industry has long been a concern of academics, who have called for regulators to increase competition for mobile and [internet services](#) in Canada.

"The outage is illuminating the general lack of competition in telecommunications in Canada," said Vass Bednar, executive director of McMaster University's master of public policy program.

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