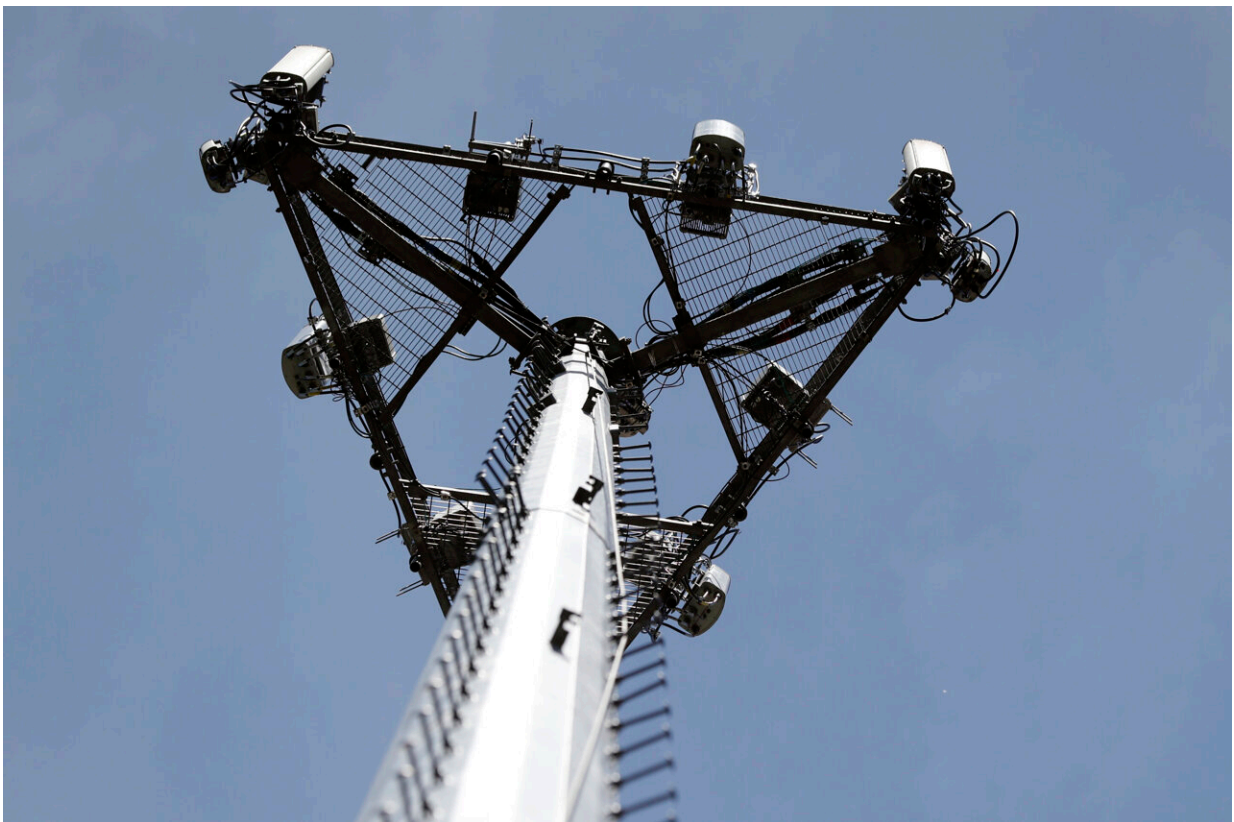


AT&T's network is having problems: What you should know while navigating a phone service outage

February 22 2024



A cellular phone tower is shown on Monday, May 22, 2017 in High Ridge, Mo. A number of Americans are dealing with cellular outages Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, on AT&T, Cricket Wireless, Verizon, T-Mobile and other service providers, according to data from Downdetector. Credit: AP Photo/Jeff Roberson

Customers of AT&T, the country's largest wireless provider, [reported widespread outages on Thursday](#).

Here's what to know if you are having problems with your [phone service](#).

When did the outage start?

[AT&T had more than 58,000 outages around noon ET](#), in locations including Houston, Atlanta and Chicago. The outages, which began at approximately 3:30 a.m. ET, peaked at around 73,000 reported incidents. The carrier has more than 240 million subscribers, the country's largest.

What is the SOS mode?

Some AT&T iPhone customers saw SOS messages displayed in the status bar on their cellphones. The message indicates that the device is having trouble connecting to their cellular provider's network, but it can make [emergency calls](#) through other carrier networks, according to Apple Support.

What is Wi-Fi calling?

AT&T urged customers to connect to Wi-Fi to use their phones. Wi-Fi calling is a built-in feature on most Android devices and iPhones and can be turned on under the phone's settings.

"Some of our customers are experiencing wireless service interruptions this morning. We are working urgently to restore service to them. We encourage the use of Wi-Fi calling until service is restored," AT&T said in a statement.



A woman looks at her phone while watching the sun set as triple-digit heat indexes continue in the Midwest Sunday, Aug. 20, 2023, in Kansas City, Mo. A number of Americans on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, are dealing with cellular outages on AT&T, Cricket Wireless, Verizon, T-Mobile and other service providers, according to data from Downdetector. AT&T, who was the hardest hit, is actively working to restore service to all of its customers. Credit: AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File



This July 18, 2019, file photo, shows an AT&T retail store in Miami. Customers of AT&T, the country's largest wireless provider, reported widespread outages on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Lynne Sladky, File



In this Friday, April 30, 2021 file photo, a man uses a mobile phone in New York. A number of Americans on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2014, are dealing with cellular outages on AT&T, Cricket Wireless, Verizon, T-Mobile and other service providers, according to data from Downdetector. AT&T, who was the hardest hit, is actively working to restore service to all of its customers. Credit: AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File

If Wi-Fi isn't available, there are few options for cell phone users. It's possible to switch services if a phone is unlocked, but that requires signing up online and [porting your phone number](#).

Some apps, including Google Maps, have limited service offline. Payment apps also do not use a phone's cell service to work and should also be useable.

What caused the outage?

AT&T has stayed mum so far on what caused the outage.

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Citation: AT&T's network is having problems: What you should know while navigating a phone service outage (2024, February 22) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2024-02-att-network-problems-outage.html>

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