

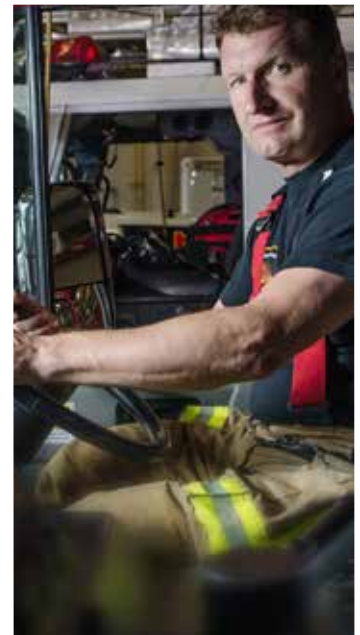


GETTING TO THE TRUTH

Don't be Misled by Verizon's FirstNet Claims – A Reality Check for Public Safety

THE TRUTH is that FirstNet is the first and only nationwide public safety communications network being purpose-built with extensive input and oversight from independent public safety experts. Verizon chose not to bid on the nationally publicized RFP for FirstNet. Now that Verizon is facing competition, it claims it will offer a system similar to FirstNet. Don't be fooled. **Verizon's belated effort will not deliver the seamless, highly secure communications for first responders that are the hallmarks of FirstNet.**

Even worse, **Verizon's claims about FirstNet are full of half-truths that denigrate the efforts of countless public safety leaders** who helped conceive and develop the nation's dedicated broadband network. See for yourself. Keep reading below to reality-check each of Verizon's claims against the truth.





VERIZON CLAIM:

Verizon has “built a dedicated private core specifically to meet the needs of public safety agencies” and FirstNet isn’t the “only private core built exclusively for public safety.”¹



REALITY CHECK:

FirstNet provides public safety services using a core network that is physically separate from the core network used for consumer wireless services. With a physically separate core, FirstNet can provide a higher degree of security and reliability for public safety compared to commercial networks. But Verizon’s so-called “dedicated” public safety core is just a “virtual” core. This means it shares the same physical infrastructure as Verizon’s existing commercial core, which also serves regular consumers. Why? It’s much cheaper to virtualize an existing core than to build out a physically separate network core truly dedicated just for public safety, like the FirstNet core. But Verizon didn’t used to think a shared core network was the right approach for public safety. In 2012, it told the government: “While FirstNet may benefit from sharing some infrastructure, it should not share core network components, i.e., the IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) and Evolved Packet Core (EPC), as doing so would undermine its ability to provide secure, high priority communications for first responders.”² Verizon should admit it was right in 2012. And it should stop pretending that its “virtual” core gives public safety the level of security and reliability they’ve been asking for.

► **FirstNet
“should not
share core
network
components.”**

– Verizon Comments
(2012)

¹Verizon Infographic (April 10, 2018)

²Verizon Comments to U.S. Dept. of Commerce
(November 9, 2012)



VERIZON CLAIM:

“Verizon offers public safety customers preemption and mobile broadband priority service at no additional charge.”³



REALITY CHECK:

When Verizon talks about “preemption,” it’s all over the place. Sometimes Verizon suggests that it offers preemption for “voice and data messages.”⁴ Other times, it says only that preemption applies to “data” and “Internet.”⁵ And still other times, Verizon says preemption is just for voice via a federally managed program called Wireless Priority Service (WPS), which prioritizes certain government users over first responders. So, what services really are subject to Verizon’s preemption? Well, that’s anybody’s guess.

▶ **FirstNet provides public safety with robust priority and preemption.**



With FirstNet, public safety gets what it asked for – “ruthless preemption” for **voice, data and texting** that’s available 24/7/365. And they get it on Band Class 14 spectrum, which is specifically designated for public safety. Priority and preemption is not only on Band 14—those services are offered across **all** AT&T spectrum bands. This means that if the network becomes crowded, non-emergency traffic is moved to another available communications channel or, if necessary, off the network, freeing up network resources for public safety voice and data traffic to get through. So, don’t let Verizon mislead you with its preemption story. And remember, the FirstNet Authority oversees the implementation of preemption for FirstNet services to verify that it works as public safety intended.

Be sure to ask Verizon: What do you really mean by “preemption?” And who will verify your claims?

³Verizon Public Safety Press Release (March 27, 2018)

⁴Verizon Preemption Solution Brief SB670318 (April 10, 2018)

⁵Verizon Public Safety Press Release (“Preemption will allow Verizon to automatically allocate network resources from commercial *data/Internet* users to first responders in the unlikely event network capacity is reached.”) (emphasis added)

When it comes to priority, it's hard to tell exactly what Verizon offers. Verizon claims it provides "priority voice and data service" with something called Mobile Broadband Priority (MBP).⁶ But elsewhere, Verizon says only that "MBP provides public safety users priority service for *data* transmissions."⁷ So, which is it? Verizon also claims that MBP "builds upon" other services, including WPS, but then it warns customers that WPS access only functions on "a limited portion of the Verizon Wireless-owned and operated 800/1900 MHz CDMA network."⁸ With FirstNet there is no doubt: public safety customers get always-on priority for **voice, data and texting**, which means they get priority access to network resources during their LTE voice, data and texting sessions.

The difference here is clear – FirstNet provides the robust preemption and priority capabilities that public safety users need to do their jobs every minute of every day. With Verizon, who knows?



VERIZON CLAIM:

"Freedom of choice is vital to ensuring continued network redundancy and innovation across the first-responder community."⁹



REALITY CHECK:

Today, public safety uses multiple different networks, which is a problem because it can impede effective communications across agencies and jurisdictions. Despite what Verizon says, the solution to this problem is not **more** disparate networks. The solution – which public safety fought for years to achieve – is FirstNet: a single, nationwide public safety broadband network constructed according to exacting requirements, with built-in redundancy and an innovative app store to enable and enhance public safety's mission. Verizon's advocacy for "freedom of choice" is just a smoke screen to cover up its decision not to bid on FirstNet in the first place.

▶ **FirstNet is being built to stringent public safety standards.**



⁶Verizon MBP Solution Brief SB680318 (2018) (emphasis added)

⁷Verizon Public Safety Press Release (emphasis added)

⁸Verizon MBP Solution Brief SB680318; Verizon WPS Solution Brief SB980518 (2018)

⁹Verizon Infographic



VERIZON CLAIM:

“Having only one carrier for public safety is not in your best interest” and “another reason to have multiple carriers is to keep the public safety emergency network open and interoperable.”¹⁰



REALITY CHECK:

FirstNet grew out of an effort to fix a long-standing problem for public safety users that became painfully evident during the terrorist attacks on 9-11: different groups of first responders were unable to communicate effectively because their radios operated on multiple, different networks. Public safety demanded a solution. And Congress created the FirstNet Authority and tasked it to build the first nationwide wireless broadband network dedicated to first responders, using a “single, national network architecture” to ensure seamless interoperable communications.¹¹ Verizon’s advocacy for “multiple carriers” splinters this single unified approach into a patchwork of disparate networks. And it leads straight back to the problem that prompted the creation of FirstNet in the first place.

▶ Interoperability is best managed within one dedicated public safety network — FirstNet.



VERIZON CLAIM:

“Using only a single wireless provider without interoperability poses a risk for your communications.”¹²



REALITY CHECK:

The FirstNet service is designed from the ground up to enable interoperability between public safety users on the FirstNet platform. That’s what public safety asked for. And that’s what FirstNet is providing. FirstNet users will have access to all the advanced capabilities on the FirstNet platform. And they’ll be able to communicate with other public safety users on other networks – a fact even Verizon knows to be true. Indeed, here’s what Verizon recently told the public safety community: “A measure of network and service interoperability exists today because of open standards. Your voice calls, text messages and public apps currently work on or between both networks, so your important communications will still get through.”¹³

▶ Open standards enable communications between public safety networks today.

¹⁰Verizon Infographic

¹¹47 USC 1422

¹²Verizon Infographic

¹³Verizon Infographic

The Truth about FirstNet Built with AT&T

ONLY FIRSTNET



Provides robust priority and preemption.

With FirstNet, robust always on public safety priority and preemption capability is available to all subscribing first responders, all the time. This system is designed specifically to meet public safety's needs. These priority and preemption tools aren't just for intermittent day-to-day events. They're always on for those large-scale incidents that have extended operational periods and require significant mutual aid resources.

ONLY FIRSTNET



Will deliver service for 25 years. Verizon wouldn't make that commitment.

The FirstNet Authority entered into a 25-year contract with AT&T to build and operate FirstNet. In addition to delivering service, the contract requires additional network build-outs and enhancements for the full term of the contract to include expansion into rural and tribal areas. Verizon has never committed to that.

ONLY FIRSTNET



Provides network visibility.

Only FirstNet provides near real-time visibility into the network and the status of the FirstNet LTE sites. No other carrier provides this service to public safety today. With FirstNet, you, the public safety user, are in control of user priority, preemption and access to network services.

ONLY FIRSTNET



Provides device interoperability along with testing, evaluation and certification for applications on the FirstNet platform.

FirstNet offers an unrivaled device testing program. The FirstNet Authority has an internal testing and evaluation program. And FirstNet follows a complete and comprehensive testing program specifically for devices. Once devices are tested and certified, manufacturers are held accountable for complying with approved standards. FirstNet also has a dedicated public safety app store and app developer program. FirstNet reviews and tests all apps for security, relevance and privacy before they can be listed in the public safety app store. Untested apps in other app stores could expose a device to security threats, significant battery drainage, and other weaknesses, which could cause the device to fail at a critical moment.