



COMMISSION ON STATE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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Public Safety Officials Warn that Older Phones May Cease Operating in 2022

The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) is issuing a warning to consumers that older phones may cease operating in early 2022 due to the retirement of 3G networks and support for phones using 3G service. This may include other devices that use 3G connectivity, such as some medical alert devices, tablets, smartwatches, home security systems, and other devices.

“It is vitally important that the public be aware that national 3G networks will no longer work sometime early next year,” said CSEC Executive Director Kelli Merriweather. “These networks support older phones and devices that won’t work after 3G networks are gone.”

The nation’s three major wireless carriers (AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile) have each announced that they plan on discontinuing 3G service in favor of 4G (LTE) and 5G service next year. According to the [Federal Communications Commission’s \(FCC\) website](#), AT&T will discontinue service in February, T-Mobile/Sprint will discontinue service between March and July, and Verizon will discontinue service at the end of 2022.

Most users of these services will be notified directly by the carriers if this discontinuation affects them. However, users of older phones used for 9-1-1 only purposes may not be notified if they do not have active service with the provider. It has long been the practice of some organizations for the homeless or domestic violence shelters to provide clients with older phones with no service since those old phones could still be used to call 9-1-1 in an emergency. Users of those older 9-1-1 only phones should be aware that they may not work after 3G service is discontinued.

Low-income individuals who are concerned that their 9-1-1 only phones may no longer be supported can apply for service through the federal Lifeline Program. Information regarding eligibility and participating providers can be found at <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/>.