



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



FirstNet®

FirstNet offers priority and preemption capabilities and coverage solutions for public safety cellular communications, allowing public safety officials to avoid network congestion that occurs during emergencies.

FirstNet is the cellular network federally contracted to provide priority service to first responders. Its purpose is to make your communications easier, safer, faster, and more efficient during emergencies which tie-up cellular networks.

FirstNet includes:

- Handsets, tablets, applications, and technologies purpose-built exclusively for first responders, based on an understanding of our needs.
- A network designed to provide 99.99% end-to-end service availability – a standard currently unmatched by any other large-scale LTE network in the world today.
- Dedicated security operations center to monitor the network (24/7/365) and mitigate threats
- First Priority which connects your call first, without you competing with non-public safety users for a connection.
- Preemption which will “detour” others from the cellular network when, without FirstNet, you would not be able to make a call. This helps ensure you have the bandwidth you need by detouring others off the network, like vehicles being routed off the highway to make room for public safety personnel.
- FirstNet gives you priority for all of your voice and data communications.

FirstNet provides cellular voice and data service—it is not a replacement for two-way radio.

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions

How much does FirstNet service cost?

The monthly service charges are (not including handset):

- \$39.99 unlimited voice, text, and data
- \$44.99 unlimited voice and data, with hotspot
- \$40 unlimited data for tablet with hotspot

Do I need a new cell phone?

Not if you currently have an unlocked phone or one with AT&T service.

Can I keep my current phone number? Yes.

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How do I join FirstNet?

1. Send an email to Andrew.W.Ely@coastguardaux.us. Include your full name, EMPLID number, and your personal email address.
2. You will receive a return email advising you of your eligibility and providing instructions for you to complete an online user profile.
3. After completing the user profile you will receive a second email with your activation code.
4. Go to an AT&T retail store with your activation code to purchase your service, and new phone if necessary.

Can I get this service without going to AT&T?

Verizon has announced their version of priority service, and other carriers may in the future. Contracting with a cellular carrier is totally your choice, based on many considerations such as coverage and price plan.

If you are considering moving to priority cellular service, here are a few FirstNet facts that may help you make your decision:

- AT&T is contractually bound to provide priority service. Other carriers are making a “best effort” to provide you with priority service.
- FirstNet provides the nation’s only public safety purpose built ALWAYS ON Priority and Preemption capability with command and control functions such as customized priority levels and priority uplift management.
- FirstNet provides priority voice, data, and texting service. Other carriers are offering only priority voice.
- The government has authorized FirstNet access to cellular channels (“Band 14”) that are set aside for first responders only — because of this, FirstNet has greater capacity to process priority calls, texts, and data.
- AT&T is under a 25-year contract with the federal government (through the FirstNet Authority) to build and operate FirstNet. In addition to delivering service, the contract requires additional network build-outs and enhancements for the next 25 years, including expansion into rural and tribal areas.
- The handsets and tablets offered by AT&T for FirstNet service are especially tested and certified for first responder use.
- FirstNet phones/tablets can use all of the applications that are available to all devices. Plus they can access FirstNet tested and certified applications especially developed for first responders.
- Coast Guard Auxiliary management can “push” FirstNet applications to members who use FirstNet devices — all members will have the applications they need to work effectively without having to search and install them.

Some of the material in this announcement is based on information provided by FirstNet and by AT&T. Auxiliary members are responsible for confirming all particulars with AT&T prior to entering into a contract for service.

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make personal and business calls on FirstNet?

Yes.

Is there a family plan? You are eligible for a 20% discount on additional lines. Only your line will have FirstNet priority service.

What happens when I leave the Auxiliary? You will get an email that your FirstNet service is ended, after which you have 30 days to set up normal service with AT&T.

Must I have a FirstNet phone for Auxiliary activities? No. Your choice to contract with FirstNet for your cellular service is your personal decision.

FirstNet is an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce, authorized by Congress in 2012 with the mission to develop, build, and operate the nationwide, broadband network that equips first responders to save lives and protect U.S. communities.