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Press Release

FirstNet & 5G: An Experience Unlike Anything Else for America's First Responders

*Bringing Public Safety the Only Nationwide Network with Comprehensive, Tower-to-Core Encryption;
AT&T Launches FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition*

DALLAS, April 1, 2021

What's the news? As public safety's partner, [AT&T](#)* is committed to evolving FirstNet® to meet first responders' needs and supporting innovative new technologies to help them stay mission ready. That's why we're announcing 3 major milestones for [FirstNet](#), the *only* network built with public safety, for public safety:

1. A first responder-centric approach to 5G
2. Bringing comprehensive tower-to-core network encryption
3. The FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition to better support responders holistically

First Responder-Centric 5G: Our approach to 5G for public safety is unlike anything else. We've upgraded the dedicated FirstNet network core to enable reliable 5G connectivity that is being built to intuitively provide America's first responders with the most optimal experience. While 5G will ultimately bring a combination of benefits like ultra-low latency and ultra-high speeds to support all kinds of users, it's essential we approach 5G in a different way for first responders. That's why, with FirstNet, we're taking the right steps for public safety in a way that meets their unique mission needs.

5G connectivity on FirstNet will be ideal for IoT and video intelligence solutions. Imagine being able to deploy cameras to the front gate of a stadium and screen attendees' temperature to potentially help prevent the spread of [COVID-19](#). Or using 5G in an ambulance to transmit patient data back to the emergency room. That's just a few ways 5G on FirstNet could help public safety achieve their life-saving missions in the future.

First responders in Houston are already experiencing the unique, early benefits. **And now, first responders in parts of 38 cities and more than 20 venues will gain access to AT&T mmWave (5G+) spectrum this April**, while also maintaining *always-on* priority and preemption across LTE – Band 14 spectrum plus all of AT&T's commercial LTE spectrum bands, which currently covers [2.71 million square miles](#) of the country. This is the beginning of a multi-phase, multi-year journey to deliver full 5G capabilities on FirstNet for public safety, but we're rolling out more locations all the time and will continue to approach 5G for public safety in a way that meets their unique mission needs.



Becoming the Only Network with Comprehensive Encryption: Security is paramount. That's why FirstNet is designed with a defense-in-depth security strategy that goes well beyond standard commercial network security measures. This provides protection without sacrificing usability or impacting public safety's missions. And now, [we've gone farther than anyone in the industry to secure public safety communications](#) by introducing comprehensive tower-to-core encryption based on open industry standards. FirstNet will be the first-ever nationwide network with this comprehensive network encryption. That means FirstNet traffic will be automatically secured as it moves from the cell tower, through the backhaul, to the core and back again. Commercial networks may encrypt parts of the communications pathway, but only FirstNet will have encryption along the entire route. To achieve this, we're rolling out security upgrades on every cell tower across the country. Houston and Cleveland are the first 2 cities to benefit this month, with nationwide completion expected by Q1 2022.

FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition: Today, the FirstNet network turns 3! And when we set out on this historic and critical initiative, we committed to *Be There* for America's first responders. We understand the service public safety provides to our communities does not come without personal sacrifice and burdens. That's why we've gone beyond our commitment to build and operate FirstNet and established the [FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition](#). With more than 2 dozen members – including organizations like the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Emergency Management Association and [International Association of Chiefs of Police](#), to name a few – the mission of the FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition is to integrate responder, community, industry and academic capabilities to support the health, wellness and readiness of America's first responders. Read more about the FirstNet Health & Wellness Coalition in our [latest blog post](#).

How will 5G connectivity on FirstNet be different from commercial networks?

FirstNet was created to truly bring public safety communications into the 21st century. That means reliable, secure and [interoperable](#) connectivity. While 5G connectivity will ultimately bring a combination of benefits like ultra-low latency and ultra-high speeds to support all kinds of users, it's essential we approach 5G in a different way for first responders. That's why, with FirstNet, we're taking the right steps for public safety in a way that meets their unique mission needs. First responders maintain voice communications with priority and preemption on LTE, while the intuitive FirstNet network determines the best route for data traffic with compatible devices, whether that's 5G+ or LTE spectrum.

While commercial wireless offerings remain available to public safety, FirstNet continues to grow because it offers distinct advantages from those commercial offerings. And the more than 15,000 agencies and organizations – accounting for more than 2 million connections nationwide – would agree.¹



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How can first responders get 5G+ connectivity on FirstNet? As a FirstNet subscriber there is no additional charge for 5G connectivity – whether for access to current 5G+ spectrum or future 5G spectrum on FirstNet. All first responders need to access 5G on FirstNet is a 5G-capable [FirstNet device](#), like the Samsung Galaxy Note 5G Ultra or the Netgear Nighthawk® 5G Mobile Hotspot. And to ensure public safety everywhere can access the power of FirstNet, individual verified first responders not already on FirstNet can sign up [online](#) or at the more than [5,000 AT&T retail stores](#) across the country.

What is FirstNet? FirstNet is the only nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform dedicated to and purpose-built for America’s first responders and the extended public safety community. Shaped by the vision of Congress and the first responder community following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, FirstNet stands above commercial offerings. It is built with [AT&T](#) in public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) – an independent agency within the federal government. The FirstNet network is providing first responders with truly dedicated coverage and capacity when they need it, unique benefits like *always-on* priority and preemption, and high-quality Band 14 spectrum. These advanced capabilities help fire, EMS, law enforcement save lives and protect their communities.

Where can I find more information? For more about the value FirstNet is bringing to public safety, check out [FirstNet.com](#). And go [here](#) for more FirstNet news.

What people are saying:

Jason Porter

President, Public Sector and FirstNet, AT&T

“5G for FirstNet is not your typical 5G. Now, there’s no doubt that 5G has a lot to offer the entire public safety community, but what’s most important is ensuring that as new technologies become available – whether it’s 5G, augmented reality, edge computing or others – that we take a first responder-centric view in how we approach its deployment. That’s what we committed to 4 years ago when we became public safety’s communications partner, and it’s what we will continue to do for decades to come. This commitment is why FirstNet is the *only* network to provide comprehensive, tower-to-core encryption for public safety. And it’s why our work with this community goes beyond connectivity by also helping ensure that those who put their lives on the line are holistically at their best day in and day out.”

Edward Parkinson

CEO, FirstNet Authority

“We are excited to bring 5G to FirstNet and see our investments in the next generation of public safety communications become reality. The FirstNet Authority has spent years working hand-in-hand with public safety across America to plan for, launch and innovate their network. They’ve told us about the need for a dedicated network that would continue to evolve as technology advanced. While there is more work to be done to advance mission-critical 5G



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capabilities for first responders, the FirstNet Authority is thrilled to deliver lifesaving capabilities to first responders with access to this new technology.”

Leroy Barrera

Administrator of Information Technology, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department

“As the largest juvenile probation department in Texas, it is essential our teams in the field have not only reliable communications, but connectivity built and designed specifically for public safety. And that’s exactly what FirstNet is. Being a part of the FirstNet 5G+ trial in Houston has given our team a glimpse into the future of what next-generation technology can provide for our first responders and the communities we serve, and we look forward to seeing public safety’s network continue to advance for years to come.”

¹As of Feb. 2021

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***About AT&T Communications**

We help family, friends and neighbors connect in meaningful ways every day. From the first phone call 140+ years ago to mobile video streaming, we @ATT innovate to improve lives.

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