

Carriers Deny Cell Shutdown Following Boston Bombings

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Wireless operators say they did not shut down cell service following the deadly bombings at the finish line of the Boston Marathon yesterday.

Amid the chaos and confusion immediately following the explosions, the Associated Press issued a report citing an unnamed source who claimed cell service had been terminated in the Boston area to prevent the remote detonation of more bombs from cell phones.

Verizon wireless and T-Mobile denied any interruption of service in the area, and the Associated Press later retracted the story.

"Verizon Wireless has not been asked by any government agency to turn down its wireless service. Any reports to that effect are inaccurate," a Verizon spokeswoman said in a statement.

AT&T also pointed out the Associated Press had retracted its report. The carrier issued the following statement:

"Our thoughts are with those affected by today's tragedy in Boston. We are working closely with local officials and we have set up a mobile calling center and phone charging station in the Sheraton Hotel," said an AT&T spokesman in an email. "In addition, our Wi-Fi network, turned up for the Boston Marathon is now available to customers of all wireless carriers and will remain on for an extended period of time."

Sprint also denied any shut down of service. A Sprint spokeswoman said that the carrier did experience some "mild call blocking" immediately following the blasts due to above normal traffic, but that otherwise the network was operating normally.

The Sprint spokeswoman said that when blocking occurs, customers can still make and receive calls, but it might take a second or third attempt for the call to go through.

"In cases like this, we recommend that customers text rather call," she said, noting that text messages transmit with very minimal to no delay, freeing up network

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capacity for law enforcement, first responders and emergency medical personnel.

Peter Svensson of the Associated Press also denied the initial report of shut downs via Twitter.

"Cellphone problems in Boston are NOT due to an intentional shutdown," Svensson wrote about thirty minutes following the initial report.

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