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at&amp;t

AT&T's band swapping  
leaves customers  
uncovered  
AT&T

## [AT&T Swaps Bands, Creates Coverage Issues](#)

*The company offers wider coverage for the 3G network over the GSM one*

The markets in the Midwest and the East and West Coasts have been affected by a band swap operated by AT&T. The company has been moving W-CDMA 3G access to the 850Mhz band, which was previously used by its well-known GSM/EDGE service. The transition of the W-CDMA 3G started at the beginning of last year, and the company is also moving the GSM/EDGE service back on the 1900 Mhz band.

According to the news, most of the 3G coverage and stability issues have been reported on the East and West Coasts markets. The company is making the switch so as to come up with a means of providing better coverage for its underdeveloped 3G network, which is tightly connected to the iPhone 3G sales.

This way, 3G users will benefit from better coverage on short term, yet the move will affect those who are in areas not equipped with 1900 Mhz cellsites, as they are expected to experience massive coverage penalty. Moreover, in some cases, users are expected to have no coverage at all, yet this supposedly depends on the market and service area.

Some voices suggest that those affected by the swap should roam on T-Mobile, yet it seems that most of the markets that experience the issue do not have reliable T-Mobile coverage. To add fuel to the fire, AT&T seems to be suggesting that those affected by the coverage issue should purchase a 3G phone at their expense, as a means of solving the problem caused by the band switch.

Mark Siegel, AT&T's executive director of analyst relations, said in a prepared statement that the company wasn't forcing customers to upgrade to 3G handsets, while also denying that representatives of the operator would be advising customers to turn from GSM equipment to 3G equipment.

The future will tell whether AT&T will actively solve the problems or continue its move rather than expanding its 3G service so as to meet standards for its network coverage. The company also has to transform into reality other claims it has made, or its customers are likely to have a rather violent reaction.