

Apple is adding Roadside Assistance via satellite to the iPhone

During the iPhone 15 launch event in Cupertino, Apple announced it's adding satellite-powered Roadside Assistance to the iPhone in a partnership with AAA. Buying and activating a new iPhone 14 or iPhone 15 series device will include two years of Emergency SOS and Roadside Assistance access for free. The services they connect you to are covered under the AAA membership terms or available on a pay-per-use basis for non-AAA members.

The Roadside Assistance service – which is US only – is an expansion of the Emergency SOS via satellite feature launched with iPhone 14 last year. If you have car trouble, you can text AAA for assistance for your emergencies, such as being locked out, running out of fuel, or a flat tire (you know, those times when you wouldn't call 911 but still need help). The service works by leveraging Apple's Emergency Text via satellite option when you have no cellular or Wi-Fi coverage.

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If you find yourself in trouble with no service, you can be connected via satellite with AAA after answering a few questions to capture important details, AAA said in a press release. “Users will receive clear guidance on how to stay connected to a satellite, so they can message with a AAA agent and get important information about the status of their

request,” said the organization.

This could prove essential if you get that flat tire or dead battery in a remote area. When you connect, a screen will pop up with those questions, then transmit the necessary information via satellite to AAA so they can dispatch someone to your location. One caveat is that the satellite feature requires a clear line of sight to the sky, so it might not work if you break down in a heavily wooded forest or the bowels of some parking garage. Additionally, AAA notes you will need to be located near a road to receive service as it doesn't provide off-road vehicle recovery.

Apple hasn't announced the cost for Emergency SOS after the first two years – the first devices to include it are only one year in.

Update: Tuesday, Sept. 12th, 6:30PM: Added more details about the service from AAA.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/9/12/23870328/apple-iphone-roadside-assistance-emergency-sos-satellite-aaa>