Best Buy is shutting down its Samsung repair program



It’s been an interesting couple of weeks for people who want ways to get their Samsung phone fixed, between revelations about the company’s onerous repair shop contracts and a failed iFixit contract renegotiation. To add to that, Best Buy’s Geek Squad is in the middle of shutting down its Samsung authorized service provider program (ASP), which lets certain Best Buy stores repair your phone with genuine Samsung parts, tools, and training.

The Verge was initially tipped off to a Geek Squad subreddit thread saying the company was leaving the program. Several others in that thread and another r/BestBuyWorkers one appeared to confirm the same.

Next, we spoke with a Geek Squad employee who not only corroborated those reports but also provided an internal screenshot stating that “Samsung ASP is ending in all SASP locations.” It directs employees to begin preparing to return their parts:

The Samsung ASP program ensured that techs at authorized Best Buy stores were certified to repair Samsung phones with official Samsung parts. Only certain stores were part of the program, and if you were near one, it would show up when you attempted to schedule a repair. But several *Verge* editors couldn't find a participating store near them when we checked — and now, that Best Buy page appears to be gone entirely.

a:hover]:text-gray-63 [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63 dark:[&>a]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray">Screenshot: Best Buy
Samsung's authorized service center locator also lists ASP stores, but at some point in the last few days, Best Buy stores seem to have disappeared from Samsung's locator. One store I'd seen listed over a week ago — the Fort Worth, Texas, suburb of Hulen — is no longer listed. I also couldn't find any Best Buy locations listed when I searched other major metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles, California, Denver, Colorado, and Miami, Florida. Instead, listed stores are almost exclusively UBreakiFix locations.

Best Buy and Samsung are not denying that they're winding down the program. Both sent non-denials to *The Verge* when we asked.

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"We're in discussions with Best Buy to determine how Samsung can best support our customers moving forward," reads a statement from Samsung head of mobile customer care Mario Renato de Castro, adding that Samsung has "more than 9,000 Samsung Mobile-certified technicians in the U.S. providing walk-in, mail-in and We Come to You van services."

"We know how important it is to our customers that we're there for them with the right services and expertise for their

technology, and we're currently working together with Samsung to evaluate the best way to support our mobile customers with authorized services and repairs," writes Best Buy spokesperson Katie Klister.

While before, anyone could schedule a Samsung repair at Best Buy, stores will apparently now only accept requests for phones bought at Best Buy, and *only* then if you purchase Geek Squad Cell Phone Complete Protection insurance. Replacement may also now involve a deductible (which can be $199 or $249 depending on how much your phone costs).

Despite the apparent wind-down of this repair program, the two companies seemingly still have tight relationships. During Best Buy's recent earnings call, CEO Corie Barry said the company is actually expanding a partnership with Samsung for "vendor-provided expert labor in appliances departments across hundreds of stores." Samsung already often stations experts inside Best Buy stores to help sell the brand's personal electronics.

But Best Buy's plan for next year is to create "further efficiencies" in its supply chain and Geek Squad repairs, Barry said on the earnings call. Some Best Buy employees are apparently bracing for layoffs today, June 6th, after the company told its field deployment project team employees to work from home and await a "business update." Best Buy Geek Squad employees already reported mass layoffs in April.

Best Buy's exit of the Samsung ASP program would leave fewer options for Samsung owners to repair their phones in light of iFixit's announcement that it was cutting ties with Samsung over parts pricing and availability. iFixit also cited limits on how many components it could sell to repair shops.

Besides that, there were plenty of odd terms in Samsung's contracts with the repair shops it authorized, according to a *404 Media* report. If those shops find non-OEM parts in a phone

they’re repairing, they’re apparently contractually required to strip those parts out and snitch on the customers.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/6/6/24164777/best-buy-ends-samsung-repair-program-geek-squad