

Comcast waives data cap until at least June 30 in response to pandemic



Enlarge / A Comcast van in Sunnyvale, California, in November 2018.

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After promising 60 days without data caps and overage fees for all customers, Comcast has decided to extend the data-cap waiver until at least June 30.

Comcast announced the data-cap waiver on March 13, saying the waiver would last until May 13 to help customers deal with the

pandemic. Today, Comcast said it will extend the data-cap waiver and other pandemic-related changes “through June 30 to help ensure students can finish out the school year from home and remain connected to the Internet during the COVID-19 crisis.”

Also extended to June 30 is Comcast’s promise not to disconnect Internet, mobile, or home phone service and to waive late fees if customers “contact us and let us know that they can’t pay their bills during this period.”

Comcast also previously made its \$10-per-month Internet Essentials plan free to new low-income customers for two months. With today’s announcement, that offer for new low-income customers will remain on the table until June 30. Additionally, Comcast will keep its Wi-Fi hotspots open to anyone who needs them through June 30.

“Our services have never been more important, and we’re doing everything we can to keep people connected to the Internet,” Comcast cable-division CEO Dave Watson said.

Normally, Comcast imposes its 1TB monthly data cap in 27 states but not in the Northeast United States where Comcast faces strong competition from Verizon’s uncapped fiber-to-the-home FiOS service. In capped areas, Comcast charges an extra \$10 for each additional block of 50GB, or \$50 more each month for unlimited data. Home Internet usage has gone up during the pandemic, but Comcast said recently that its network has enough capacity to handle the surge.

Verizon extends no-disconnection pledge

Verizon today extended a pledge to keep customers connected through June 30. “This means we will neither terminate service nor charge late fees to our postpaid wireless, residential,

and small business customers that notify us of their inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic,” Verizon said. Customers must contact Verizon to avoid losing service if they can’t pay their bills.

Verizon said last week that it’s giving wireless customers an extra 15GB of data in May.

More than 700 providers have signed the FCC’s “Keep Americans Connected” pledge, which includes not terminating service to customers who cannot pay because of the pandemic, waiving late fees for customers affected by the pandemic, and opening Wi-Fi hotspots to the public.

Like Comcast, AT&T went beyond the FCC pledge to also waive data caps on home Internet service during the pandemic. But AT&T hasn’t announced whether it will extend its cap waiver past May 13.

Update: AT&T announced it will continue to waive overage charges for postpaid wireless customers until June 30 but didn’t say whether it will extend the cap-waiver for home Internet service. Like Verizon, AT&T extended its no-disconnection pledge until June 30.

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