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| https://www.att.com/Common/insider/news_now/att_globe_w_text_123x60.png**Coronavirus (COVID-19): Our path forward** **To**: All AT&T Communications employees Connectivity is always essential to our customers – doctors and nurses, first responders, governments, banks, grocery stores, pharmacies and others delivering vital services. It’s even more critical during a public health crisis that’s challenging everyone. In fact, as a critical infrastructure provider, it’s our civic duty to step up and keep our customers and communities connected. That’s why this week, we responded to the coronavirus (COVID-19) with decisive steps that change the way we work, socialize and interact as a community. With so much coming at us, I wanted to give you the latest on the crisis and what it means for all of us. ***Staying safe on the frontlines***We have implemented new policies and guidelines to help protect our non-management and management employees who are on the frontline serving customers or who can’t do their jobs from home. We’re working to keep up with demand for hand sanitizer and other supplies and are sourcing these from multiple vendors.**In retail**, our goal is to limit employees’ exposure while still upholding our responsibility to meet the essential needs of first responders and customers who are counting on us. * So, today we’ll begin closing 40% of our company owned retail stores nationwide. Closures will continue while we concentrate our resources on select stores to meet the immediate service needs of our customers, including first responders and healthcare providers.
* Stores that do remain open will have adjusted store hours to one shift a day, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time, and closing all stores nationwide on Sundays.
* Staffing in stores that remain open will adhere to social distancing guidelines, while still being able to serve customers.
* Let me stress that our focus is on serving customer needs in retail. New sales are not the priority during this time.
* We will ensure all retail employees maintain their full targeted compensation.

**Our call center** capacity has declined because of the leave accommodations we have made for our parents of school children and higher-risk employees. Reduced capacity in our call centers is pressuring our ability to service *and support* our customers. As a result, we’re taking the following steps: * Loading new interactive voice messages (IVRs) that encourage customers to take advantage of our self-help online tools at [att.com](http://att.com).
* Adjusting call center staffing levels and shifts to ensure proper social distancing. This may result in longer hold times for service.
* And just like in retail, we’re taking actions to prioritize service issues — optimizing the handling of calls, whether inbound or outbound, and balancing capacity across all functions.

**Our field technicians** play a critical role in the installation and repair of our services for millions of businesses and consumers. While their mission is essential to keep our customers connected, we also recognize that there is a balance between providing service and keeping our technicians safe. To accomplish that balance, we’re providing them with new policies and procedures so they feel comfortable serving customers at their businesses and in their homes, while delivering on our commitment to service. We’re also doing triage on the work we ask our field techs to perform, prioritizing their work as follows: * Our first priority is repair of the network and the services we provide to customers.
* Second is broadband installs for health care providers, first responders, government and other essential business and service providers like grocery stores and financial services. We will work other installations as resources allow.
* Our third priority will be installs for pay TV services.

***Taking care of yourselves and your families***You’re all doing amazing work to take care of our customers. But remember to take care of yourselves as well. If you feel sick, contact your healthcare provider immediately, and reach out to your supervisor. If someone in your care is sick or needs help, those are your priorities. Your teammates will pick you up. ***Looking ahead***The situation is fluid, but we promise to bring you daily updates on Insider to help you stay informed. Please visit our [COVID-19 Insider channel](https://insider.att.com/channels/1418020) and use the comments section to let me know if you need anything, see an area that requires attention, want to recognize great work being done or have any questions we can help address.I know that this public health crisis is challenging you like never before. But I also know you’ll continue to pull together, look out for one another and help get us – and our communities – through this crisis. https://about.att.com/ecms/dam/corpcomm/ATT-inc-TheResource/NewsNow/Jeff%20Signature.jpgJeff McElfreshCEO, AT&T Communications  |