

Shopping for a new phone plan is difficult. Whether you walk into a store or shop on a website, trying to figure out what you're getting and what you're paying for is confusing. I think we've all been surprised when we get that first bill to see added fees. A \$40/mo plan might cost \$140 a month down the road. The FCC will start requiring all wireless companies to post broadband labels, sort of like nutritional labels on food, starting April 10th. The story is what the labels look like, where to find them, and what they mean.

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SUPERS

0-8 Jamey Tucker/whatthetech.tv  
13-20 Steve Van Dinter/Verizon

### **ON-CAMERA TEASE**

IT'S ABOUT TO GET A LOT EASIER FOR CONSUMERS TO SHOP FOR A NEW SMARTPHONE PLAN. TO FIND OUT EXACTLY HOW MUCH THEY'RE PAYING, WHAT THEY'RE PAYING FOR, AND FOR HOW LONG. I'M JAMEY TUCKER I'LL EXPLAIN COMING UP.

### **ANCHOR INTRO**

THE F.C.C. IS SET TO PUT NEW REQUIREMENTS IN PLACE FOR ALL WIRELESS CARRIERS, TO BE MORE UPFRONT ABOUT THE SMARTPHONE PLANS THEY OFFER CUSTOMERS.

FOR ANYONE WHO'S SIGNED UP FOR A NEW PLAN, YOU KNOW THERE'S OFTEN A DIFFERENCE IN THE PLAN YOU WERE OFFERED, AND WHAT YOU'RE PAYING EACH MONTH. OUR CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY REPORTER JAMEY TUCKER EXPLAINS HOW THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WILL AFFECT SMARTPHONE USERS.

### **PACKAGE SCRIPT**

We've all experienced it. Whether we're shopping for a new phone plan online or in a store. It's confusing and you may not even know how much you're paying each month and for how long. Now the government is requiring wireless companies to put labels on their phone plans.

"The FCC, a few years back came up with this idea of coming up with a way for consumers to more easily digest the information they're hearing from broadband providers."

Verizon's Steve Van Dinter tells me the new labels are familiar to consumers since they look like the nutritional labels on grocery items. Easy to read, easy to comprehend.

“You’re going to see at the top, what the monthly price is, and what you’re going to see as you go down, is whether there are any additional charges or terms that are required.”

Verizon is using the labels ahead of the FCC’s April deadline. You’ll see them on Verizon’s website. And in stores, each representative has a tablet to display the labels to help customers decide on a plan.

Consumers often see a plan price and are shocked to find out it was just an introductory price and the phone bill jumps by \$50 or so a month. The broadband labels spell out those terms.

“The top piece, the \$80 that you saw and the additional fees, that is the most you will ever see on your bill because it doesn’t include those discounts. So you’ll see the discounts in this section and that will be subtracted off that top piece.

Another key part of the broadband labels is information about upload and download speeds you should get with the plan.

“And what you can do is then take these labels side-by-side with any provider you’re thinking of doing business with, and see what you’re getting and what you’re paying.”

If you don’t see those broadband labels clearly displayed at the point of sale on the website or in stores, you should contact the FCC. Those companies will be breaking the law as of April 10th.

That’s What the Tech? I’m Jamey Tucker

## **ANCHOR TAG**

THE APRIL 10TH DEADLINE IS FOR THE LARGEST PROVIDERS, VERIZON, T-MOBILE, AND AT&T. WIRELESS PROVIDERS WITH FEWER THAN 100-THOUSAND CUSTOMERS HAVE UNTIL OCTOBER 10TH TO MAKE THE LABELS AVAILABLE.

## **WEB STORY**

We’ve all experienced the difficulty of shopping for a new phone plan. Even shoppers going inside the store might have trouble understanding what they’re signing up for and how much they’ll be paying each month.

Now the government is requiring wireless companies to put labels on their phone plans.

“The FCC, a few years back came up with this idea of coming up with a way for consumers to more easily digest the information they’re hearing from broadband providers.”

Verizon’s Steve Van Dinter tells me the new labels are already familiar to consumers since they look like the nutritional labels on grocery items. Easy to read, easy to comprehend.

“You’re going to see at the top, what the monthly price is, and what you’re going to see as you go down, is whether there are any additional charges or terms that are revised,” Van Dinter explains.

Verizon is already using the labels ahead of the FCC's April 10th deadline. You'll see them on Verizon's website and in stores. Each representative has a tablet to display the labels to help customers decide on a plan. The FCC requires the labels to be visible and available to consumers at any point of sale.

Consumers often sign up for a plan at one price and are shocked to find out it was just an introductory price and the phone bill jumps by \$50 or so a month. The broadband labels spell out those terms along with all fees and taxes.

"The top piece, the \$80 that you saw and the additional fees, that is the most you will ever see on your bill because it doesn't include those discounts," Van Dinter said. "So you'll see the discounts in this section and that will be subtracted off that top piece."

Another key part of the broadband labels is information about upload and download speeds provided in the plan.

Van Dinter says the labels are available online and can be printed out to help consumers compare prices and plans of all the carriers. "And what you can do is then take these labels side-by-side with any provider you're thinking of doing business with, and see what you're getting and what you're paying."

If consumers don't see the labels displayed in stores or on the websites by April 10th, you should file a complaint with the FCC. The April deadline is for major wireless carriers such as Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile. Smaller carriers (those with fewer than 100,000 customers) have until October to comply with the FCC requirement.