All about the conversion of individual 3G frequencies

The demands of mobile phone customers are growing as rapidly as technological progress. This is why Swisscom is constantly investing in improving its network. In doing so, it is sometimes necessary to use transfer frequencies for newer technologies. In future, the 2100 MHz frequency, which is currently used for 3G (UMTS, HSPA, HSPA+), will be used for newer technologies (a process referred to as "refarming" in technical jargon). The 3G network will continue to be available to Swisscom customers.

Impacts

Most devices support multiple 3G frequency bands. They will automatically switch to the 900 MHz frequency used in Europe and will continue to function smoothly. If individual devices do not support this other frequency in addition to the 2100 MHz frequency, they will normally switch automatically to 2G. It should be noted that 2G will only be supported until the end of 2020. These devices would therefore need to be modernised or replaced by the end of 2020.

3G coverage

Swisscom's 3G network will continue to provide excellent coverage even after the conversion, both on the move and inside buildings. The coverage continues to exceed 99% of the Swiss population. In some cases, there may be changes due to the antenna settings. In these cases, an antenna extension can help to ensure the reception of an alarm system in the basement of a house, for example. Your supplier will advise you whether or not an antenna extension makes sense for your system.

Customer information

For the last six months, Swisscom has been informing customers by letter and/or SMS whose devices only support the 3G network with the 2100 MHz frequency. These are customers with old or imported mobile phones and smartphones as well as customers using Machine-to-Machine (M2M) and Internet of Things (IoT) applications. Several thousand customers are affected.

Swisscom has supported private customers using such a mobile phone by offering a special, greatly reduced range of devices. In recent months they have been able to switch to a current mobile phone/smartphone. M2M and IoT customers generally use special solutions. Swisscom has provided assistance in identifying the modules and contacting the respective providers.

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For customers with a smartphone/mobile phone

What will continue to work?

Most smartphones and mobile phones will automatically use 3G on other frequencies or technologies like 4G. Old or imported devices that can only use the 3G network with a frequency of 2100 MHz can generally use the 2G network. 2G offers slower data rates. It should also be noted that 2G will only be supported until the end of 2020.

Recommendation

Swisscom recommends that customers whose mobile phone/smartphone cannot use the current technologies 4G and 5G as well as today's standard 3G frequencies change their device. This will enable them to make full use of the options offered by their mobile phone connection in the future too. Private customers (subscription or prepaid) with such old devices have received a personal voucher for a greatly reduced, current smartphone from Swisscom. The new device can be purchased in all Swisscom shops, online and via the hotline.

Problematic implications

For broadband data applications, there may be noticeable limitations if only 2G can be used with the old mobile phone/smartphone.

Applications may no longer function satisfactorily

Hotline contact

Residential customers: 0800 800 800
SMEs: 0800 055 055
Enterprise customers: 0800 444 404

swisscom

M2M and IoT applications

What will continue to work?

Most radio modules will continue to work automatically on 2G. As many classic M2M applications only require slow data rates, the slow data rates of 2G should also be sufficient for the applications. It should be noted that 2G will only be supported until the end of 2020.

Recommendation

Swisscom recommends the use of 4G modules that are already widely deployed. Swisscom's 4G network already has very high coverage and offers significantly faster transfer rates compared with 3G.

For modules affected by 3G refarming, it should be checked whether the application can perform its task with the slower 2G transfer rate. As 2G will only be supported until the end of 2020, we recommended switching to 4G in plenty of time.

Problematic implications

For broadband or time-critical data applications, there may be noticeable limitations, and therefore these applications may no longer work satisfactorily. Customers should check this at an early stage.

Next steps

Analyse your 3G devices and check the manufacturer's technical fact sheets. The supplier of the application can help you. If you wish, Swisscom can check which module identifier your applications use to log on to our network and make this information available to you. Contact your hotline regarding this.

Operators of 50 or more IoT devices can also digitise entire processes. Swisscom's IoT Connectivity Management Platform and the associated IoT SIM cards offer these customers a wide range of solutions. For more information, visit www.swisscom.ch/iot

Hotline contact

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SMEs: 0800 055 055
Enterprise customers: 0800 444 404

For more information about 3G conversion and the discontinuation of 2G, visit: www.swisscom.ch/2g