BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Cell Signal Boosters & Wi-Fi Calling

Clear calls at home, on the road and in an emergency — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide to better cell service at home

Take your time — checking your signal can't hurt a thing

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For iPhone, Samsung Galaxy & Google Pixel · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to getting your phone working well at home. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there's no test, and you can't fall behind. If you only read one part, make it Part 3 on Wi-Fi Calling: it's free, and for many homes it solves the problem. Every chapter explains what a fix does *for you*, with slow, step-by-step directions. If a screen looks a little different on your phone, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Why Your Phone Struggles at Home

What causes weak cell signal indoors, the handful of words you'll hear from carriers and booster makers, and how to tell which carrier and phone you really have.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you've ever stood at the kitchen window holding your phone up in the air, walked out to the porch to finish a call, or missed a text from the grandkids because your phone showed one lonely bar, this guide is for you. Weak cell signal at home is one of the most common frustrations I hear about, especially out in the country, where the nearest tower can be miles away behind a hill or a stand of trees.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped people get comfortable with their technology, and I serve families all over Portage County, Ohio. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain things sitting beside you at the kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time. When a new word comes up, I'll stop and explain it right there.

What this guide covers

- **Why signal is weak indoors**, and how to measure what you really have, not just count bars.
- **Wi-Fi Calling**: the free setting that lets your cell phone make ordinary calls over your home internet, on iPhone, Samsung Galaxy and Google Pixel.
- **Your 911 emergency address**, and why it matters when you call over Wi-Fi.
- **Cell signal boosters** for the home and the car: how they work, the FCC rules, honest prices and when they won't help.
- **Other fixes**: network extenders, satellite texting on newer phones, switching carriers and home internet options.
- **Coverage maps** from the carriers and the FCC, and how to tell the FCC when a map is wrong.
- **Dropped calls**, a step-by-step checklist, and the **scams** that target phone owners.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll know why your phone struggles at home, what your real options are, which ones cost nothing, and which ones are worth paying for. Most of all, you'll be able to make calls from your own living room again, and know you can reach help in an emergency.

The honest promise

Looking at your phone's settings, checking your signal and reading coverage maps can't hurt a thing. Turning Wi-Fi Calling on or off is just as safe: if you don't like it, switch it back. There are two places where I'll ask you to slow down. The first is your **911 emergency address**, which needs to be right. The second is **buying a booster**, which costs real money and comes with FCC rules. I'll point out those careful moments as we go.

GOOD TO KNOW

Written for today's phones

This guide is written for November 2026: iPhones running iOS 26 or iOS 27, and Android phones such as Samsung Galaxy (One UI 8) and Google Pixel (Android 16). Menus move around a little between models and carriers. If your screen doesn't match exactly, the idea is almost always the same.

And you're never stuck alone. If you'd like a hand, call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together. There's no such thing as a silly question about your own phone.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Why Signal Is Weak Inside Your Home

Your cell phone talks to a **cell tower** by radio, a lot like a very small, very clever walkie-talkie. Anything that weakens that radio signal along the way, from miles of distance to the walls of your own house, shows up as fewer bars, garbled voices and dropped calls. Knowing the cause points you straight at the right fix.

The usual suspects

Cause	What it does
Distance to the tower	In rural areas, towers can be far apart. The farther away you are, the weaker the signal, and your phone has to work harder (and use more battery) to stay connected.
Hills, valleys and trees	Radio signals travel best in a straight line. A ridge between you and the tower, or a thick woodlot, can block or weaken it. Leaves full of water in summer can make it worse than in winter.
Metal roofs and siding	Metal reflects radio signals. A metal roof, metal siding or a steel building can turn a decent outdoor signal into a weak one inside.
Energy-efficient (low-E) windows	Many newer windows have a thin, invisible metallic coating that keeps heat in. That same coating can cut the cell signal that passes through the glass.
Brick, stone, concrete and basements	Thick, dense walls soak up signal. Basements are often the worst rooms in the house.
A busy tower	At busy times, many people sharing one tower can slow data down, even when your bars look fine.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why your neighbor's phone works better

Different carriers use different towers. Your neighbor may be on a carrier with a tower on the next hill, while yours is on a carrier whose nearest tower is miles away. That's why switching carriers is sometimes the cheapest fix of all (Chapter 20).

Outside versus inside

Here's the single most useful thing to check before you spend a dime: **step outside and look at your signal**. If you get a reasonable signal in the yard but almost nothing in the living room, your house is the problem, and Wi-Fi Calling or a booster can help a great deal. If you get nothing even outside, a booster has nothing to work with, and you'll want Wi-Fi Calling, a different carrier or satellite texting instead. Chapter 7 walks you through this simple test.

TIP

Try the window first

Before anything else, try making calls near a window on the side of the house that faces the nearest town or main road. It costs nothing, and for some homes it's enough.

CHAPTER 3

Plain-English Words You'll Hear

Carriers and booster companies love their jargon. Here are the words that matter, in plain English. You don't need to memorize them; just come back here whenever one comes up.

Word	What it means
Carrier	The company that provides your cell service, like Verizon, AT&T or T-Mobile.
Prepaid or budget carrier	A company that sells cell service on one of the big carriers' networks, often for less. Examples include Visible, Mint Mobile, Consumer Cellular and Straight Talk. You may hear them called **MVNOs**.
Bars	The little steps in the corner of your screen. A rough guide to signal strength, not an exact measurement.
dBm	The real measurement of signal strength. It's always a negative number, and closer to zero is better: -85 is stronger than -110.
LTE, 4G, 5G	Generations of cell technology. You'll see one of these next to your bars. 5G is the newest, but a strong 4G LTE signal is perfectly good for calls.
Dead zone	A spot with little or no cell signal.
SOS or "No Service"	Your phone can't reach your carrier. "SOS" on an iPhone means emergency calls may still get through on another carrier's network.
Wi-Fi Calling	A built-in phone setting that sends ordinary calls and texts over your Wi-Fi internet when cell signal is weak. Same phone number, same Phone app.
E911 address	The street address you give your carrier so 911 knows where to send help if you call over Wi-Fi.
Signal booster	A kit with an outside antenna, an amplifier and an inside antenna that strengthens a weak cell signal you already have.
Network extender	A small carrier-made box that plugs into your internet and acts like a tiny cell tower in your home. Also called a femtocell. Most have been retired.
Coverage map	A map from a carrier or the FCC showing where service is supposed to be available.
FCC	The Federal Communications Commission, the U.S. agency that sets the rules for boosters, carriers and coverage maps.

HEADS UP

"SOS" is not the same as service

If your iPhone shows SOS instead of bars, you can't make regular calls or send regular texts from that spot. Emergency calls may still work. Move to a better spot, use Wi-Fi Calling, or see Chapter 19 about satellite texting on newer phones.

CHAPTER 4

Which Carrier and Phone You Have

Almost every fix in this guide depends on two things: **which carrier you use** and **which phone you have**. It sounds obvious, but it trips people up all the time, especially with prepaid brands that run on someone else's network.

Find your carrier

- **Look at your bill or your account app.** The company you pay is your carrier for billing and support.
- **Look at the top of your screen.** On many phones the carrier's name appears in the status bar or when you swipe down from the top corner.
- **Prepaid brands use the big networks.** Your service may say "Mint" on the bill but run on T-Mobile's towers, or say "Visible" and run on Verizon's. That matters for coverage maps: check the map for the network your brand uses. Some brands, such as Consumer Cellular and Straight Talk, use more than one network, depending on your SIM card.

Find your phone model and software

Phone	Where to look
iPhone	Open **Settings** > **General** > **About**. You'll see the Model Name and the iOS Version.
Samsung Galaxy	Open **Settings** > **About phone**. The model name is at the top; tap **Software information** for the One UI and Android version.
Google Pixel	Open **Settings** > **About phone**. Tap **Android version** to see the version number.

TIP

Write it down once

Jot your carrier, the network it runs on, your phone model and your account PIN on the cheat-sheet at the end of this guide. When you call your carrier or a booster company, they'll ask for all of it.

Why the phone matters

Most smartphones from the last several years support Wi-Fi Calling, but some budget models and many flip phones don't. Satellite texting needs an iPhone 14 or later, or one of a short list of newer Android phones. And on prepaid carriers, Wi-Fi Calling sometimes works

only on phones the carrier has approved. If you're thinking of a new phone anyway, my Prepaid & Budget Carriers manual can help you compare.

PART 2

Measuring Your Signal

What the bars really mean, how to see the true signal number on your phone, and a simple walk-around test that tells you which fix will work in your home.

CHAPTER 5

What the Bars Really Mean

The bars in the corner of your screen are a quick, friendly guess at your signal strength. They're handy, but they aren't a measurement, and they can fool you.

Why bars can mislead

- **Every phone maker draws them differently.** Three bars on one phone may be the same signal as two bars on another. Comparing your bars to your spouse's different phone doesn't tell you much.
- **Bars measure strength, not quality.** You can have several bars and still get choppy calls if the tower is busy or the signal is noisy.
- **Bars react slowly.** They can take a few seconds to catch up when you move to another room.
- **The letters matter too.** "5G" or "LTE" next to the bars shows which kind of network you're on. A strong LTE signal is better for calls than a weak 5G one.

A rough guide

What you see	What it usually means	What to expect
4 or 5 bars	Strong signal	Clear calls and fast data.
2 or 3 bars	Fair signal	Calls usually fine; data may be slow.
1 bar	Weak signal	Calls may break up or drop; texts may be slow to send.
SOS or No Service	Can't reach your carrier	Regular calls and texts won't work from that spot.

TIP

The fairer test

If you want to compare two phones or two spots in the house, use the real number (dBm) instead of bars. Chapter 6 shows you where to find it.

CHAPTER 6

Seeing Your Real Signal Number

Behind the bars is a real measurement called **dBm**. It's always a negative number. Remember just one rule: **closer to zero is stronger**. So -75 is a strong signal and -115 is very weak. Booster installers and carrier technicians will often ask you for this number, so it's worth knowing how to find it.

A rough scale

Signal (dBm)	What it means
-50 to -90	Strong. Calls should be clear.
-90 to -105	Fair. Usually fine for calls; data may be slower.
-105 to -115	Weak. Expect choppy calls and drops indoors.
Worse than -115	Very weak or unusable.

GOOD TO KNOW

These are rough guides

Carriers and phone makers don't publish one official scale, and different phones measure a little differently. Use the numbers to compare rooms in your own house with your own phone, not as a pass-or-fail grade.

On a Samsung Galaxy

1. Open **Settings**.
2. Tap **About phone**, then **Status information**.
3. Tap **SIM card status** (or **SIM status**). Look for **Signal strength**, shown in dBm.

Menu names vary a little by model and Android version. If you can't find it, try typing "signal" in the search box at the top of Settings.

On an iPhone: Field Test Mode

Apple doesn't show dBm in the regular Settings, but iPhones have a hidden diagnostic screen called **Field Test Mode**. It's safe to look at; you can't change anything there.

1. Open the **Phone** app and tap **Keypad**.
2. Dial ***3001#12345#*** and tap the green call button. No call is placed; the Field Test screen opens instead.

3. Look for a reading labeled **RSRP**. That's your signal strength in dBm.
4. To leave, swipe up from the bottom (or press the Home button) as you would to close any app.

HEADS UP

Field Test Mode isn't the same on every iPhone

The layout changes with iOS versions and carriers, and some iPhones don't show a dBm number at all. If yours doesn't, don't worry: the walk-around test in Chapter 7 works with bars, too.

On a Google Pixel

Google's help pages describe the signal triangle at the top right (the more it's filled in, the stronger the signal) but don't describe a dBm readout in Settings. On a Pixel, the bars are fine for the walk-around test in Chapter 7. A booster installer can measure the exact number with their own meter if it's ever needed.

CHAPTER 7

The Walk-Around Signal Test

This ten-minute test is the most useful thing in the whole guide. It tells you whether your problem is your house or your area, and that decides which fix will work. All you need is your phone and a notepad.

1. **Turn off Wi-Fi for now** so the phone is using cell signal only. (On an iPhone, open Control Center and tap the Wi-Fi button; on Android, swipe down from the top and tap Wi-Fi.)
2. **Start in the room where calls are worst.** Wait about 30 seconds, then write down the bars (or the dBm number from Chapter 6) and the letters next to them, such as LTE or 5G.
3. **Check the other rooms you use most:** the kitchen, your favorite chair, the bedroom, an upstairs room. Write each one down.
4. **Go outside.** Check the front yard, the back yard and, if you can, by the driveway or the highest spot on your property. Write those down too.
5. **Make a short test call** from the best indoor spot and the best outdoor spot.
6. **Turn Wi-Fi back on** when you're done.

Reading your results

What you found	What it points to
Good outside, poor inside	Your house is blocking the signal. **Wi-Fi Calling** (Part 3) is the free fix; a **home booster** (Part 4) is the paid fix.
Fair outside, poor inside	A booster can still help, especially with the outside antenna mounted high. Wi-Fi Calling is still the first thing to try.
Nothing anywhere, even outside	A booster can't help: there's nothing to boost. Use **Wi-Fi Calling**, look at **another carrier**, and consider **satellite texting** for emergencies (Part 5).
Good in one room only	Make that room your phone spot, or use Wi-Fi Calling everywhere else.

TIP

Borrow a friend's phone

If a visiting friend or relative uses a different carrier, ask them to try the same spots. If their phone does much better, that's a strong hint that another carrier has a closer tower.

FROM BILL

Bring me your notes

If you call me for help with signal, these notes save time and money. Knowing what your phone shows inside and outside tells me right away which fixes are worth trying.

PART 3

Wi-Fi Calling: The Free Fix

If you have home internet, your phone can make ordinary calls over Wi-Fi. Here's how to turn it on for iPhone, Samsung and Pixel, set your 911 address, and get it working with your carrier.

CHAPTER 8

What Wi-Fi Calling Is, and Why to Try It First

Wi-Fi Calling is a setting built into nearly every modern smartphone. When it's on and your cell signal is weak, your phone quietly sends your calls and texts over your home Wi-Fi internet instead of through the cell tower. You use the same Phone app, the same phone number and the same contacts. The person you call doesn't need to do anything, and usually can't tell the difference.

Why it's usually the best first step

- **It's free.** The big carriers and most prepaid brands include Wi-Fi Calling at no extra charge. Calls to U.S. numbers count the same as any other call on your plan.
- **It works even with no cell signal at all**, as long as your Wi-Fi works. A booster can't do that.
- **Nothing to buy or install** if you already have home internet.
- **It turns itself on and off.** Your phone uses the cell network when it's good, and Wi-Fi when it isn't.

What you need

You need	Details
Home internet with Wi-Fi	Cable, fiber, DSL, fixed wireless, 5G home internet or satellite internet. Your Wi-Fi needs to reach the rooms where you make calls.
A phone that supports it	Nearly every iPhone and Android smartphone from recent years. Some flip phones and budget phones don't.
A carrier that supports it	Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and many prepaid brands do. A few prepaid brands support it only on certain phones (Chapter 12).
A 911 emergency address	You'll be asked for your street address when you turn it on (Chapter 11).

GOOD TO KNOW

How you'll know it's working

On an iPhone, the top of the screen shows your carrier's name followed by **Wi-Fi** (for example "Verizon Wi-Fi") when Wi-Fi Calling is in use. Many Android phones show a small phone-with-Wi-Fi icon in the status bar.

HEADS UP

Two honest limits

Wi-Fi Calling is only as good as your Wi-Fi. If your internet is slow or the Wi-Fi is weak in that room, calls can break up. And when the power or internet goes out, Wi-Fi Calling stops too, so keep a backup plan for emergencies (Chapter 11).

If your Wi-Fi itself doesn't reach the far bedroom or the back porch, my Home Wi-Fi & Routers manual explains how to spread it through the house.

CHAPTER 9

Turn On Wi-Fi Calling on an iPhone

This takes about two minutes. Make sure your iPhone is connected to your home Wi-Fi first, and have your full street address handy.

1. Open the **Settings** app (the gray gear).
2. Tap **Cellular**. If you have two lines (two SIMs), tap the line you want under Cellular Plans.
3. Tap **Wi-Fi Calling**.
4. Turn on **Wi-Fi Calling on This iPhone**. If a message explains how it works, tap **Enable**.
5. If you're asked to enter or confirm your address for emergency services, type your full street address carefully and save it.
6. Look at the top of the screen. When Wi-Fi Calling is in use, you'll see your carrier's name followed by "Wi-Fi."

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> **Can't find it under Cellular?**
> On some iPhones and carriers the switch has been under **Settings** > **Apps** > **Phone** > **Wi-Fi Calling** instead. If it isn't in either place, your carrier may not offer Wi-Fi Calling on your plan or phone yet. Call them and ask.

Change your emergency address later

1. Go to **Settings** > **Cellular** > **Wi-Fi Calling**.
2. Tap **Update Emergency Address**.
3. Correct the address and save it.

Using Wi-Fi Calling on your iPad or Mac

On the same Wi-Fi Calling screen you may see **Add Wi-Fi Calling For Other Devices**. This lets your iPad or Mac make and take calls through your iPhone's number even when the iPhone isn't nearby. Not every carrier offers it. It's handy, but you don't need it for the iPhone itself.

TIP

Leave it on

There's no need to turn Wi-Fi Calling off when you leave home. Your iPhone uses the cell network whenever it's good enough, and Wi-Fi when it isn't. Apple notes that when cell service is available, your iPhone uses it for 911 calls.

CHAPTER 10

Turn On Wi-Fi Calling on Samsung Galaxy and Google Pixel

Android phones put Wi-Fi Calling in slightly different places depending on the maker and the carrier. Connect to your home Wi-Fi first, and have your street address handy.

Samsung Galaxy: from the Phone app

1. Open the **Phone** app.
2. Tap **More options** (the three dots), then tap **Settings**.
3. Tap the **Wi-Fi Calling** switch to turn it on.
4. If a pop-up asks for emergency contact details or an address, review it, fill it in, and tap **Save**.

Two other ways on a Galaxy

- **Quick settings:** swipe down from the top of the screen with two fingers and tap the **Wi-Fi Calling** button, if your phone shows one.
- **Settings app:** on some models, go to **Settings** > **Connections** > **Wi-Fi Calling**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Samsung's requirements

Samsung says you must be connected to Wi-Fi and have active service on a SIM card or eSIM. If you can't see the option at all, your carrier may not offer Wi-Fi Calling on your phone; contact them.

Google Pixel

1. Open **Settings**.
2. Tap **Network & internet**, then **SIMs**.
3. Tap your carrier's SIM.
4. Tap **Wi-Fi calling** and turn on **Use Wi-Fi calling**.
5. Follow any prompts to enter your emergency address.

TIP

Not there?

Google says if you don't find the option, your carrier doesn't support Wi-Fi calling on your phone. On some Android phones it's also in the Phone app: tap the three dots > **Settings** > **Calling accounts** > your carrier > **Wi-Fi Calling**. Google also suggests checking with your carrier about any fees before you turn it on.

Other Android phones

On Motorola and other Android phones, open **Settings** and type "Wi-Fi calling" in the search box at the top. It's usually under **Network & internet**, **Mobile network** or your SIM's settings. Straight Talk suggests restarting the phone after you turn it on.

CHAPTER 11

Your 911 Emergency Address

This is the one part of Wi-Fi Calling I want everyone to get exactly right. When you call 911 over a cell tower, the system can usually work out where you are. Over Wi-Fi, it may have to rely on the **emergency address** you gave your carrier. If that address is wrong, help could be sent to the wrong place.

What the carriers say

Rule	What it means for you
Cell first	Apple says that when cell service is available, your iPhone uses it for emergency calls. Wi-Fi Calling is used for 911 only when cell service isn't available.
Automatic location, then your address	AT&T says a 911 call over Wi-Fi first tries to use your phone's automatic location, and uses your emergency address only if that isn't available.
A real street address	AT&T requires a U.S. street address, not a P.O. box. Verizon checks it against the Postal Service's address list and may suggest a corrected version.
Required before it works	T-Mobile says you need an E911 address on your account before you can use Wi-Fi Calling.
If you skip it	Verizon says that if you don't set one, it may use your service address (or, on prepaid, your billing address) as your 911 location.

Keep it right

- **Use the full address** where you actually live, including any apartment or lot number. In the country, use your 911 street address, not a rural route or P.O. box.
- **Update it when you move**, and when you spend a season somewhere else, like a winter home or a long stay with family.
- **Say where you are.** Verizon advises always telling the 911 operator your location out loud, whatever your phone sends.

Where to change it

Where	How
iPhone	**Settings** > **Cellular** > **Wi-Fi Calling** > **Update Emergency Address**.
Verizon (online)	Sign in to **My Verizon**, go to **Account settings** > **E911 addresses**, and edit the line you want.

Where	How
Verizon (Android)	In the phone's Wi-Fi Calling settings, tap **Update Current Emergency Address**.
T-Mobile (online)	Sign in at T-Mobile.com, go to **Account** > **Profile settings**, choose the line, then **E911 Address**.
Mint Mobile	In the Mint app or website, under **Wi-Fi Calling & Text**.

STAY SAFE

When the power goes out

Verizon warns that 911 over Wi-Fi needs a working internet connection: if it's lost, for example in a power outage, the call will drop or fail. If your home has no cell signal at all, plan ahead. Know the nearest spot outside where your phone gets a signal, and consider a backup way to call, such as a home phone line (my Home Phone Service manual explains the options) or satellite emergency features on a newer phone (Chapter 19).

CHAPTER 12

Wi-Fi Calling with Your Carrier

The big three carriers all offer Wi-Fi Calling. Prepaid and budget brands vary: most offer it, but some only on certain phones or after you switch it on in your account. Here's what each one says.

Carrier	What to know
Verizon	Offered on most smartphones and some basic phones. Set your emergency address on the phone or in My Verizon. Verizon has steps for its 4G basic phones too.
AT&T	Offered on most smartphones. AT&T says Wi-Fi Calling is **off by default** on most phones, so you have to turn it on yourself.
T-Mobile	Offered on most smartphones. An E911 address must be on your account first.
Mint Mobile	Included on all plans. Turn it on **in your Mint account first** (app or website: Wi-Fi Calling & Text > Enable, and enter your 911 address), then on your phone. Mint sends a text to confirm.
Visible	Offered on phones that support it on Visible's network. Visible's steps start by turning on HD Voice on your phone.
Consumer Cellular	Offered on compatible smartphones at no extra charge. Not available on its Link II flip phone. Some phones need a particular SIM; ask Consumer Cellular.
Straight Talk	Offered on many phones. Use Straight Talk's Wi-Fi Calling eligibility page to check yours.

GOOD TO KNOW

Does it cost extra?

Not with these carriers for ordinary calls in the U.S. Wi-Fi calls still count against your plan's minutes the same as any call (most plans today are unlimited anyway). Calling another country is a different matter: check your carrier's international rates. My Staying Connected While Traveling manual covers using Wi-Fi Calling abroad.

TIP

If your carrier isn't listed

Search your carrier's website for "Wi-Fi Calling" or call their customer service and ask two questions: "Do you support Wi-Fi Calling on my phone?" and "Do I need to turn it on in my account first?"

CHAPTER 13

When Wi-Fi Calling Isn't Working

Most Wi-Fi Calling problems come down to one of four things: the setting is off, the Wi-Fi is weak, the carrier hasn't switched it on for your line, or the phone needs a restart. Work down this list.

1. **Check that you're on Wi-Fi.** Open your Wi-Fi settings and make sure you're connected to your home network, not just near it.
2. **Check the switch.** Go back to the Wi-Fi Calling setting (Chapter 9 or 10) and make sure it's on.
3. **Check your emergency address.** Some carriers won't turn Wi-Fi Calling on until a valid address is saved.
4. **Restart the phone.** Turn it off, wait 30 seconds, turn it back on.
5. **Turn Wi-Fi Calling off and on again.**
6. **Try a different Wi-Fi network**, such as a family member's or the library's. If it works there, the problem is your home internet or router.
7. **Update your phone's software**, then try again.
8. **Call your carrier.** Ask them to check that Wi-Fi Calling (and HD Voice, if they mention it) is turned on for your line.

Calls work but sound choppy

- **Move closer to your router**, or add Wi-Fi coverage in that room (my Home Wi-Fi & Routers manual explains mesh systems and extenders).
- **Restart your router** by unplugging it for 30 seconds.
- **Pause big downloads or streaming** on other devices during important calls, if your internet is slow.
- **If the Wi-Fi is weak but the cell signal is decent**, Mint notes that turning Wi-Fi off and using the cell network can work better.

HEADS UP

Satellite internet and Wi-Fi Calling

If your home internet comes from a satellite dish, calls may have a slight delay, depending on the service. Try a few calls and judge for yourself. If they feel awkward, a booster (Part 4) may suit you better, as long as there's some signal outside.

PART 4

Cell Signal Boosters

How a booster takes the weak signal outside and brings it indoors, the FCC rules every owner must follow, honest prices, and the difference between home and vehicle kits.

CHAPTER 14

How a Booster Works, and When It Can't Help

A **cell signal booster** (also called a signal amplifier or repeater) is a kit that catches the weak cell signal outside your home, strengthens it, and sends it back out indoors. It works for calls, texts and data, and it works in both directions, so your phone's signal gets back to the tower better too.

The three parts

Part	What it does
Outside antenna	Mounted on the roof, a pole or an outside wall. It picks up the signal from the tower. Some point in one direction toward a tower; others pick up from all directions.
Amplifier	The box inside (often in the attic, a closet or near an outlet) that strengthens the signal. A cable runs from the outside antenna to it. It adjusts itself to stay within FCC limits.
Inside antenna	Rebroadcasts the stronger signal into the room or rooms where you need it.

The rule that matters most

HEADS UP

A booster can't create a signal

A booster only strengthens a signal that's already there. If your phone shows no signal even outside, on the roof line or at the end of the driveway, there is nothing to boost, and a booster will not help. Do the walk-around test in Chapter 7 before you buy anything.

Other things to know before you shop

- **Boosters help the people near the inside antenna.** A small kit may cover one or two rooms; a bigger kit covers more. Coverage shrinks when the outside signal is weaker.
- **The two antennas have to be kept apart.** If they're too close, the booster can feed back on itself, much like a microphone held next to a speaker. Good kits notice this and turn themselves down, which shrinks your coverage.
- **Many boosters work with all the major U.S. carriers at once**, which is handy when family members use different carriers. Some "smart" boosters are made for just one carrier, so check before you buy.

- **Boosters don't fix a busy tower.** If calls are fine at night but slow every evening, the tower may be crowded, and a booster won't change that.

TIP

Try Wi-Fi Calling first

If you have decent home internet, try Wi-Fi Calling (Part 3) for a week before buying a booster. It's free, and for many homes it solves the problem. A booster earns its keep when you don't have good internet, when several people and phones need help, or when you want better signal for data too.

CHAPTER 15

FCC Rules: The Label and Registering Your Booster

Boosters are legal to own and use, but the FCC has rules, because a badly made or badly installed booster can interfere with the cell network, and even with police and fire radios. The rules are simple once you know them.

Rule 1: buy one with the FCC consumer label

A booster meant for home or vehicle use must carry an FCC label that begins **"This is a CONSUMER device."** The label tells you to register it with your wireless provider and to have the provider's consent before you use it. The major carriers, including Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile, have agreed in advance to allow boosters that meet the FCC's consumer standard.

HEADS UP

"NOT a CONSUMER device"

Some boosters sold online are labeled as industrial devices, meant to be installed by FCC licensees and qualified installers. You may not use one yourself without the carrier's permission and a proper installation. If the box has no FCC label at all, don't buy it.

Rule 2: register it with your carrier

The FCC requires you to **register a consumer booster with your carrier before you turn it on**. Registration is free. Carriers ask for basic details: your name, the booster's make, model and serial number, where it's installed, and the date you started using it. If several people in the house use different carriers, each carrier needs its own registration. For a vehicle booster, the FCC says anyone who regularly rides along and uses it should register it with their carrier too.

Carrier	Where to register
Verizon	Verizon's "Register signal booster" page on verizon.com. Verizon says there's no fee. Its online form has had technical problems at times; if it fails, a Verizon representative can register the booster for you.
AT&T	AT&T's support article "Boost your wireless signal" links to its Consumer Signal Booster Registration page.

Carrier	Where to register
T-Mobile	T-Mobile's "Register a signal booster" support page links to its Signal Booster Registration form. Choose **Register My New Signal Booster**; you'll need your T-Mobile account number and the booster's details.
Prepaid brands	The FCC says customers of resellers must register too. Ask your prepaid brand how; they may send you to the network they use.

TIP

Where to find the details

The make, model, serial number and FCC ID are printed on the label on the amplifier. Take a clear photo of that label with your phone before you mount the amplifier somewhere awkward, like the attic.

Rule 3: switch it off if asked

Consumer boosters are allowed only as long as they don't cause interference. If your carrier or the FCC tells you your booster is causing trouble, you must turn it off and help sort it out. You're also not allowed to disable the built-in protections. Using a booster without the right label, consent or registration can bring serious FCC penalties, although the FCC has said it may give first-time violators a warning and a chance to shut the booster down first.

CHAPTER 16

Home Boosters: Choosing, Costs and Installing

If your walk-around test showed a fair signal outside and a poor one inside, a home booster can make a real difference. Here's how to choose sensibly and what to expect to pay.

Honest prices

Kind of kit	Example (not a recommendation)	Typical list price
Small kit: one room or a small home	weBoost Home Studio	about $349.99
Mid-size kit: several rooms	weBoost Home MultiRoom	about $569.99
Large homes, very weak signal	Bigger kits, or a professional installation	Higher; get a written quote first

Prices change and sales are common, so check current prices before you buy. Add the cost of anything extra you need, such as a mounting pole or longer cable, and installation if you won't be climbing on the roof yourself.

Questions to ask before buying

- Does it carry the **FCC consumer label**?
- Does it work with **my carrier** (and my family's carriers)?
- How much area does it cover **with a weak outside signal like mine**, not just in the best case?
- What's the **return policy** if it doesn't help? Thirty days is worth looking for.
- Is installation included, and who will **climb the ladder**?

How installation usually goes

1. **Find the best outside signal**, usually high on the side of the house facing the nearest tower. The walk-around test helps here.
2. **Mount the outside antenna** there, on the roof line, a pole or an outside wall.
3. **Run the cable** into the house, often through an attic or along the siding.
4. **Place the amplifier** indoors near a power outlet, often in the attic or a closet.
5. **Place the inside antenna** in the room where you need signal most, as far as you can from the outside antenna.

6. **Register the booster** with your carrier (Chapter 15), then turn it on and check your signal in each room.

> **STAY SAFE**
>
> **Please don't climb**
>
> Mounting an outside antenna means ladders and rooftops. If you're not steady on a ladder, have family, a handyman or a professional installer do the outside part. A booster isn't worth a fall.

CHAPTER 17

Vehicle Boosters

Rural roads have dead spots, and the metal body of a car or truck makes signal weaker inside. A **vehicle booster** puts a small antenna on the roof, an amplifier under a seat or in the trunk, and a small antenna inside near where you hold or mount your phone.

Is one worth it for you?

Worth a look	You drive long rural stretches regularly, you have an RV or camper, or you need reliable calls on the road for health or work reasons.
Probably not	Your drives are mostly in town, or the problem is a spot with no signal at all. A booster still needs some signal outside the car.

Costs and rules

- Popular vehicle kits cost several hundred dollars. For example, weBoost lists its Drive Reach at about $499.99. Smaller kits cost less; check current prices.
- Vehicle boosters follow the same FCC rules as home boosters: **buy one with the consumer label** and **register it with your carrier** before you use it.
- Keep cables tidy and away from pedals, and mount the inside antenna where it won't distract you or fly around in a sudden stop.

STAY SAFE

Hands off while driving

A booster makes calls clearer, but it doesn't make phone calls behind the wheel any safer. Use your car's Bluetooth or a hands-free mount, and keep calls short. And follow the hands-free laws where you drive.

TIP

Before a long trip

Turn on Wi-Fi Calling at home and learn how satellite texting works on your phone, if it has it (Chapter 19). My Staying Connected While Traveling manual covers the rest.

PART 5

Other Ways to Get Better Service

Network extenders and what's left of them, texting by satellite on newer phones, switching carriers, home internet options, and a simple guide to choosing the right fix.

CHAPTER 18

Network Extenders: What's Left in 2026

A **network extender** (also called a femtocell or, at AT&T, a MicroCell) is a small box from your carrier that plugs into your home internet and acts like a tiny cell tower inside your house. Unlike a booster, it doesn't need any outside signal. For years these were the go-to answer for rural homes. Today, most of them are gone, because Wi-Fi Calling does the same job for free.

Where each carrier stands

Carrier	What's available
Verizon	Verizon still lists an **LTE Network Extender** on its website (list price $174.99 when checked). Its FAQ says there's no additional monthly charge, though one news report said some customers were being told about a $5.99 monthly charge, so ask before you buy. The older 4G LTE Network Extender and Network Extender 2 are no longer sold. Verizon says a network extender doesn't need to be registered like a booster.
AT&T	The AT&T MicroCell was retired years ago, and AT&T's business Cell Booster Pro is no longer available. I couldn't confirm a current AT&T home unit; ask AT&T about your options.
T-Mobile	T-Mobile says its coverage devices, including the CellSpot and its signal booster, are discontinued and no longer available for purchase. T-Mobile points customers to Wi-Fi Calling.

GOOD TO KNOW

Do you need one?

Probably not, if your phone supports Wi-Fi Calling. An extender made the most sense for older phones that couldn't do Wi-Fi Calling. If you have an older extender still plugged in, check with your carrier that it's still supported; some older models stopped working when carriers shut down their 3G networks.

HEADS UP

Extenders need good internet

Like Wi-Fi Calling, an extender depends on your home internet. If the internet or the power is out, so is the extender.

CHAPTER 19

Texting by Satellite on Newer Phones

Here's something that would have sounded like science fiction a few years ago: many newer phones can send a text message straight to a satellite when there's no cell signal and no Wi-Fi. It won't fix weak signal inside your house, but on a back road, at a cabin or in an emergency, it can be the difference between reaching family and not.

iPhone: Messages via satellite

	Details
Which iPhones	iPhone 14 or later, with iOS 18 or later in the U.S.
Cost	Apple includes its satellite features free for two years after you activate an iPhone 14 or later.
What you need	An active SIM, a carrier that supports SMS via satellite (for regular texts), and iMessage turned on before you lose service (for iMessages).
Where it works	The U.S., Canada, Mexico and Japan.
How to use it	Go outside with a clear view of the sky and horizon. When your iPhone has no cell or Wi-Fi, open Messages and follow the on-screen prompts, which show you where to point the phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Emergency SOS by satellite

iPhone 14 and later can also reach emergency services by satellite text when you have no signal. If you call 911 and can't connect, your iPhone may offer to text emergency services by satellite instead.

Android and carrier satellite texting

Carrier	What's offered
Verizon	Satellite texting through Skylo on select Android phones, including the Samsung Galaxy S25 line, Galaxy Z Fold7 and Z Flip7, and Google Pixel 9 and later. Verizon says there's no extra fee. Google Messages must be your texting app, and pictures and group features aren't supported.
T-Mobile	**T-Satellite** works with most smartphones from recent years. It's included on T-Mobile's top plans, such as Experience Beyond; on other plans it was offered at $10 a month per line (a limited-time price; the regular price is listed as $15 a month).
AT&T	I couldn't confirm AT&T's current satellite texting plans; ask AT&T.

HEADS UP

Satellite texting is slow and outdoors-only

Messages can be slow to send, and you need a clear view of the sky. Trees, hills and roofs block it. It's a lifeline, not a replacement for good service at home.

CHAPTER 20

Switching Carriers

Sometimes the simplest fix is a carrier with a closer tower. In rural areas, one carrier can be far better than another just a few miles apart. You can usually keep your phone number when you switch.

How to find out before you switch

1. **Check the coverage maps** for your exact address (Part 6). Look at each carrier's own map and the FCC's map.
2. **Ask your neighbors** which carrier works in their houses. Real experience beats any map.
3. **Borrow a phone** from a visitor on another carrier and run the walk-around test (Chapter 7).
4. **Try a prepaid plan first.** Many prepaid brands let you try a network for a month without a contract. Some phones can hold two lines (two SIMs or eSIMs), so you can test a second carrier without giving up the first.
5. **Check the return window** on any new phone or plan before you commit.

TIP

Prepaid brands and the networks they use

Remember that prepaid brands ride on the big networks. Trying a prepaid brand on a different network is a cheap way to test that network at your house. My Prepaid & Budget Carriers manual explains the brands and how to switch.

HEADS UP

Keep your number safe while switching

Only start a switch yourself, from the new carrier's official store, website or app. Never give your account PIN or a number-transfer code to someone who calls or texts you. See Chapter 26.

CHAPTER 21

Home Internet and Home Phone Options

Because Wi-Fi Calling depends on home internet, the quality of your internet matters. And if cell signal at home is hopeless, a home phone line may still make sense.

If you don't have good home internet

- **5G or 4G home internet** from Verizon, T-Mobile and others uses the cell network to bring internet into your house through a box by the window. It's only offered at some addresses; check by entering your address on the carrier's website. Note that it needs decent cell signal at the house, which is the very thing you may lack.
- **Satellite internet** works almost anywhere with a clear view of the sky, and many rural homes rely on it.
- **Cable, fiber, DSL and fixed wireless** from local providers. New lines have been reaching rural areas, so it's worth checking again even if the answer was "no" a few years ago.

The FCC National Broadband Map (Chapter 24) also lists the home internet providers that say they serve your address.

Keeping a home phone

A home phone line, whether a traditional copper line, a cable or internet phone, or a cellular home phone base, gives you a fixed number at your address. Some families keep one simply as a backup for emergencies. My Home Phone Service manual walks through the choices and their costs honestly.

CHAPTER 22

Which Fix Fits Your Home?

Here's everything in Parts 3 to 5 boiled down. Start with your walk-around test results and pick the row that matches.

Your situation	Try first	Then consider
Good signal outside, poor inside, good home internet	Wi-Fi Calling (free)	A home booster if Wi-Fi Calling isn't enough
Fair signal outside, poor inside, poor or no internet	A home booster with the outside antenna mounted high	Better home internet, then Wi-Fi Calling
No signal anywhere, good home internet	Wi-Fi Calling	Another carrier; satellite texting for trips
No signal anywhere, no good internet	Check other carriers' coverage	Satellite internet plus Wi-Fi Calling; a home phone line
Dead spots on the road	Satellite texting on a newer phone	A vehicle booster

FROM BILL

I can help you decide

If you'd like a second opinion before spending money on a booster or a new carrier, I can test the signal in your home and talk through the options with you. No pressure to buy anything.

PART 6

Coverage Maps

How to read the carriers' own maps, how to use the FCC's National Broadband Map, and how to tell the FCC when a map says you have service that you don't.

CHAPTER 23

Reading the Carriers' Coverage Maps

Every carrier publishes a map showing where it says you'll get service. They're a good starting point, especially when you're comparing carriers, but they are **estimates**. A map can't see your metal roof, the hill behind your barn or the trees along your road.

Where to find them

Carrier	Map
Verizon	**verizon.com/coverage-map**. Enter your address to see 5G Ultra Wideband, 5G or 4G LTE coverage. The same map shows whether Verizon home internet is offered at your address.
AT&T	**att.com/maps/wireless-coverage.html**. AT&T describes it as approximate outdoor coverage. The AT&T coverage page also checks home internet at an address.
T-Mobile	**t-mobile.com/coverage/coverage-map**. Enter an address or ZIP code, or tap the location button. It also shows where T-Satellite works.
Prepaid brands	Most have their own map, or check the map of the network they use.

How to read them sensibly

1. **Type your full street address**, not just your town or ZIP code. Zoom in on your home.
2. **Look at the color or shading for your exact spot**, and read the key (legend) to see what it means.
3. **Remember most maps show outdoor coverage.** Indoors, expect less, sometimes much less.
4. **Check the roads you drive** often, too: the way to church, the grocery store, the doctor.
5. **Compare carriers** for the same address, and then check the FCC's map (Chapter 24).

> TIP
> **The best map is your neighbors**
>
> Ask two or three neighbors which carrier works inside their homes. If everyone on your road says the same carrier works best, that's worth more than any map.

HEADS UP

Store promises

If a salesperson says "you'll have great coverage there," ask about the return policy anyway. Give a new carrier a real test at home within the return window.

CHAPTER 24

The FCC Map, and Telling the FCC It's Wrong

The FCC runs the **National Broadband Map** at **broadbandmap.fcc.gov**. It shows the home internet providers that say they serve your address and the mobile coverage each cell carrier reports. These maps help decide where government money for better service goes, so an honest map matters for rural areas like ours.

Look up your address

1. On a computer or phone, go to **broadbandmap.fcc.gov**.
2. Type your street address in the search box and choose it from the list.
3. Look at the **fixed** (home internet) results, then switch to the **mobile** view to see what each carrier reports for your location.

If the mobile map is wrong: the FCC Speed Test app

If the map says a carrier covers your area but your phone gets little or nothing, you can help correct it with the free **FCC Speed Test** app (the newer mobile app the FCC launched in July 2024; the original FCC app no longer runs tests).

	Details
Where to test	**Outdoors or in a moving vehicle**, using the cell network, not Wi-Fi. Tests run indoors are kept as general data but don't count as a challenge.
What it asks for	Your name, email address and the phone number of the phone you're testing, with location turned on.
What happens next	The FCC gathers tests every month. When enough failed tests cluster in an area, it opens a challenge. The carrier must then back up its map with its own data or remove that area from its coverage.
What it can't do	The app challenges **mobile** coverage only. Wrong home internet listings use a separate challenge on the map's website.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why it's worth a few minutes

Every honest test helps show where service is really missing. A few neighbors running tests along the same road can make a weak spot visible to the FCC and the carriers.

STAY SAFE

Test safely

Never run tests while you're driving. Have a passenger do it, or pull over somewhere safe.

PART 7

Dropped Calls and Staying Safe

A calm checklist for dropped and choppy calls, and the scams that target phone owners: fake carrier calls, stolen phone numbers and booster offers that aren't what they seem.

CHAPTER 25

Dropped Calls: A Troubleshooting Checklist

Calls that drop or break up are maddening. Work through these steps in order. Most of them take a minute and cost nothing.

First, the quick checks

1. **Is it everywhere, or just one spot?** If calls only drop in certain rooms or on one stretch of road, it's coverage. Go to Part 3 (Wi-Fi Calling) or Part 4 (boosters).
2. **Turn on Wi-Fi Calling** at home if you haven't (Chapter 9 or 10).
3. **Restart the phone.** Turn it off, wait 30 seconds, and turn it back on. This clears up a surprising number of problems.
4. **Turn Airplane Mode on, wait ten seconds, then turn it off.** This makes the phone reconnect to the nearest tower.
5. **Update the phone's software.** Updates often include fixes for calling and the cell network.
6. **Take off a thick or metal case** and see whether it helps.

Then, the deeper checks

1. **Ask: did it start suddenly?** If calls were fine last month and terrible now, call your carrier. There may be a tower problem or outage in your area, or a problem with your account or SIM.
2. **Ask your carrier to check your line** and whether HD Voice and Wi-Fi Calling are turned on.
3. **Ask about a new SIM card** if your phone is several years old or the SIM has been moved between phones.
4. **Try another phone** on your account, or yours in someone else's home. If the problem follows the phone everywhere, the phone itself may need service.

HEADS UP

Your phone suddenly shows SOS or No Service everywhere

If your phone loses all service in places where it always worked, and a restart doesn't fix it, call your carrier right away from another phone. The FCC warns that a phone suddenly going dark can be the first sign that a scammer has moved your number to their own phone (Chapter 26).

Choppy calls on Wi-Fi

If calls break up only when you're on Wi-Fi Calling, the problem is your Wi-Fi or internet, not the cell network. Restart your router, move closer to it, or see the Wi-Fi tips in Chapter 13 and my Home Wi-Fi & Routers manual.

TIP

Keep a little log

When calls drop, jot down the date, time, where you were and who you called. If you need to complain to your carrier, or ask for a credit, specific notes get much better results than "my calls keep dropping."

CHAPTER 26

Scams Around Signal, Boosters and Your Phone Account

Anyone who's struggling with phone service is a target for people offering a quick fix. Scammers also go after phone accounts themselves, because whoever controls your phone number can often get into your bank and email. These warnings come straight from the FCC and FTC.

SCAM ALERT

"I'm calling from your phone company"

A caller or text says there's a problem with your account, a new booster or upgrade is waiting for you, or your service is about to be cut off, and asks you to read back a code that was just texted to you. The FTC says **anyone who asks for your verification code is a scammer**. The code is only for you to sign in. Hang up, and call your carrier at the number on your bill or in its official app.

SCAM ALERT

Stealing your phone number (SIM swap and port-out)

Scammers pretend to be you and ask your carrier to move your number to a new SIM or a new carrier. Once they have your number, they can receive your bank and email security codes. The first sign is often a phone that suddenly shows no service or only emergency calls. Contact your carrier right away, then change your important passwords and check your bank accounts.

SCAM ALERT

"Your number is being used for crimes"

The FTC warned in October 2026 about callers pretending to be FTC officials who say your phone number is linked to crimes and threaten to shut off your service. The FTC is not calling to deactivate your phone number, and a real FTC employee will never ask you to send money. Hang up.

SCAM ALERT

Boosters that aren't what they claim

Be wary of ads for gadgets that promise to "boost" or "amplify" signal with no outside antenna, stickers or clips for the back of your phone, apps that claim to boost signal, and booster kits with no FCC consumer label. A real booster always has an outside antenna, an amplifier and an inside antenna, and carries the FCC label (Chapter 15). If an offer arrives by an unexpected call or text, don't buy from it.

Protect your phone account today

1. **Set an account PIN or passcode** with your carrier, and ask about its account lock or number-lock option. The FCC now requires carriers to offer extra protection and to notify you when someone asks to move your number or change your SIM.
2. **Never share** your account PIN, a verification code or a number-transfer code with someone who contacted you.
3. **Use an authenticator app** instead of text-message codes for your most important accounts where you can. The FTC notes that text codes may not stop a SIM swap.
4. **Report scams** at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

TIP

Already shared a code?

Don't panic, and don't be embarrassed: these callers are professionals. Call your carrier from the number on your bill, tell them what happened, and ask them to lock your account. Then change the password on your email and bank accounts. If you'd like help, call me.

PART 8

Getting Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary of the whole guide.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can handle most signal problems on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or money, so here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Before you buy a booster.** We'll measure your signal inside and out and see whether a booster will really help, or whether Wi-Fi Calling or another carrier makes more sense.
- **Wi-Fi Calling that won't turn on**, or calls that keep breaking up on Wi-Fi. Often the fix is in the router or the Wi-Fi coverage.
- **Setting your 911 emergency address** correctly on every phone in the house.
- **Registering a booster** with your carrier when the online form won't cooperate.
- **Comparing carriers** for your exact address, or moving your number to a new one safely.
- **A call or text about your phone account** that you're not sure about. Ask before you act.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace: no rushing, no talking down, and no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll tell you honestly when a gadget or a new plan isn't worth your money. I serve Portage County, Ohio, and I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. Help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. If I'm with another customer, my AI receptionist, Sophie, will answer and make sure I get back to you. No question is too small.

Thank you for letting me help. A phone that works at home isn't a luxury; it's how you stay close to family and reach help when you need it. Now you know how to make yours work.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Signal & Wi-Fi Calling Cheat-Sheet

Print just this page and keep it by the phone. The whole guide, boiled down.

Where things are

I want	Go here
Wi-Fi Calling on iPhone	Settings > **Cellular** > **Wi-Fi Calling**.
Wi-Fi Calling on Samsung	Phone app > three dots > **Settings** > **Wi-Fi Calling**.
Wi-Fi Calling on Pixel	Settings > Network & internet > **SIMs** > your SIM > **Wi-Fi calling**.
Change my 911 address (iPhone)	Settings > Cellular > Wi-Fi Calling > **Update Emergency Address**.
Real signal number (Samsung)	Settings > About phone > Status information > **SIM card status**.
Coverage maps	verizon.com/coverage-map · att.com/maps/wireless-coverage.html · t-mobile.com/coverage/coverage-map · **broadbandmap.fcc.gov**.

Everyday moves

When	Do this
Calls bad at home	Turn on **Wi-Fi Calling** first. It's free.
Choosing a fix	Do the **walk-around test**: check signal inside and outside.
Calls dropping	Restart the phone, toggle Airplane Mode, update the software.
Buying a booster	Look for the **FCC consumer label**, then **register it** with your carrier.
No signal outside either	A booster won't help. Use Wi-Fi Calling, try another carrier, or use satellite texting for emergencies.
Map is wrong	Run the **FCC Speed Test** app outdoors to challenge it.

Keep handy

Item	
My carrier (and the network it uses)	_____
My account number and PIN (keep private)	_____

Item	
My 911 emergency address on file	_____
Best signal spot inside / outside	_____
Booster make, model and serial number	_____

Safety, in three lines

- Keep your 911 emergency address correct, and always tell the 911 operator where you are.
- Never share a verification code or your account PIN with anyone who contacts you.
- Phone suddenly shows no service everywhere? Call your carrier right away from another phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You now know why your signal is weak, how to make calls over Wi-Fi, when a booster is worth it, and how to keep your phone account safe. When you'd like a hand, call (330) 200-8042.