

Sprint, T-Mobile delay S4 phone, cite inventory (Update)

April 24 2013, by Anick Jesdanun



In this March 14, 2013 file photo, attendees try out the new Samsung Galaxy S4 during the Samsung Unpacked event at Radio City Music Hall in New York. (AP Photo/Jason DeCrow, File)

Sprint and T-Mobile are delaying shipments of Samsung's latest flagship phone, citing inventory issues.

The delays in the Galaxy S4 appear to be the result of supply disruptions from Samsung, rather than heavier-than-expected demand seen by the U.S. carriers. In statements Wednesday, T-Mobile said the delay is with "inventory deliveries," while Sprint said it's "due to unexpected inventory challenges from Samsung."

Samsung Electronics Co. cited overwhelming demand from around the world and said it expected "to fulfill inventory to meet demands in the coming weeks."

Sprint's launch was scheduled for Saturday. Sprint Nextel Corp. said it still expects to sell the device over the Internet and by phone, but retail stores and other distribution channels won't get them until later. The company didn't say when.

T-Mobile had expected to start taking orders online on Wednesday. That's now expected to start Monday. There was no word on whether T-Mobile still planned to start retail store sales on May 1.

The S4 has a slightly larger screen than its predecessor, the Galaxy S III, but it's lighter and smaller. The S4 sports new camera tools, an optical-reader app and the ability to perform tasks by waving a finger over a sensor.

Sprint charges \$250 for the base model, with 16 gigabytes of memory, or \$150 if the buyer is coming over from another carrier. A two-year contract is required.

T-Mobile USA is charging \$150 up-front and \$20 per month for two years under its new installment plans. Those plans replace two-year service contracts that most carriers require. T-Mobile has abandoned them in favor of cheaper month-to-month plans.

AT&T Inc. said it was planning to start selling the S4 in stores on Saturday as scheduled. The company already has started taking advance orders and plans to ship the phones starting next Tuesday. AT&T is charging \$200 for the base model, with a two-year contract.

Verizon Wireless has said it will sell the phone, but hasn't announced a release date or price. Smaller carriers U.S. Cellular, Leap Wireless' Cricket and C Spire will also sell the phone.

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