

Apple starts doling out iPhone 4 cases to solve 'death grip'

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Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer Inc., speaks during a press conference regarding the Apple iPhone 4 reception problems at the Apple headquarters, July 16, in California. Apple on Friday began doling out iPhone 4 bumpers to address concerns that touching certain parts of the handset chokes telecom signal strength.

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In true Apple style, the free bumpers were made available through an application that could be downloaded to iPhones from the Cupertino,

California-company's online iTunes shop.

"If you are experiencing reception issues with your iPhone 4, you are eligible to receive an iPhone 4 Bumper or other select third-party case from Apple at no charge," said a message at an iTunes Case Program page.

"Download this free app onto your iPhone 4 and apply for your free Bumper or case."

The California gadget-maker is hoping a 29-dollar rubber-and-plastic case will put an end to the debate over the antenna on what Apple chief executive [Steve Jobs](#) calls "perhaps the best product we've ever made."

The bumper, which fits around the sides of the phone, will be free to all buyers of the iPhone 4 through the end of September, and customers who have already purchased the case will be reimbursed.

"Thanks Apple for your commitment to fix an issue that may or may not exist," a person with the screen name 'Bam'o' wrote in a customer review chat forum at the iPhone case program Web page.

"The App was a simple download and easy to navigate. Just get it and move on."

The iPhone 4 has been bedeviled with complaints about dropped calls from the moment it appeared on store shelves a month ago.

Some [iPhone](#) 4 users claimed they lost reception when holding the lower left corner of the phone -- whose unusual [antenna](#) wraps completely around the device -- in what has been referred to as the "death grip."

Jobs held an exclusive press event last week to announce that [Apple](#)

would give [iPhone 4](#) owners the bumpers designed to prevent users from touching external antennas on the rims of handsets.

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