

Starbucks: Computer outage disrupts sales in US, Canada

25 April 2015, by Chris Grygiel



A Starbucks store closes Friday, April 24, 2015, in Phoenix because of computer issues. Starbucks says a sales register computer glitch has disrupted sales at company-operated stores in the United States and Canada. The company apologized to customers for the inconvenience late Friday and said it was working to resolve the outage. Customers found some stores closed and others offering free coffee. (AP Photo/Traci Carl)

A computer outage affecting registers forced Starbucks to give away free drinks Friday before closing stores early.

The coffee chain said the [outage](#) affected 7,000 company-operated stores in the U.S. and 1,000 in Canada. It did not say when it expects registers to be back up and running, or explain exactly what caused the outage.

The outage began in the early evening on the East Coast and in the late afternoon on the West Coast.

Stores that had not already closed for the evening were closed early, the company said Friday evening.

"We are actively working to resolve the outage," Starbucks said in a statement. "We apologize to our customers for any inconvenience or confusion."

Earlier, customers found some stores closed and others offered free brewed coffee or tea. In Phoenix, some stores blocked off the entrance to their drive-thrus.

At a Starbucks store in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, customers were told staff members couldn't process orders. They were, however, being offered coffee at no charge.

"I'm not going to complain about a free cup of coffee," said Suveer Sharma, who was getting a caffeine fix before he headed on a weekend trip to Idaho.

At a Starbucks in Phoenix, customers drove away angrily after seeing closed signs.

"I have a sleeping baby in the back and I'm waiting for a prescription," said Claudia Larson, 40, of Scottsdale. "I wanted a coffee! I'm bummed!"

Starbucks is busiest in the mornings but has been trying to attract more customers later in the day.

In Williamsburg, Virginia, Tom Roberts was part of two couples who stopped by a Starbucks after dinner. He said they accepted the store manager's offer of free coffee or tea.

"They were super polite in coping with it," he said of Starbucks staff.

As in the West, some customers took the news harder than others.

"One guy had been driving all day, he was anxious for a nice fancy Starbucks—but she gave him a large [coffee](#) and he was cool," Roberts said. "I think he had a little craving going."

The company said the outage also affected four Evolution Fresh stores and six Teavana Tea Bar stores. It did not affect Teavana mall stores, Starbucks spokesman Jim Olson said.

The problem also did not affect about 5,000 licensed stores in the U.S. or about 300 licensed stores in Canada, Olson said.

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