

Cellular Roaming

Once we took roaming for granted when traveling. Now city people may be unaware of it. This memo combines e-mail sent Oct 2-12, 2015 from a few small towns describing native service and roaming for four main carriers. This is about roaming possibilities, not these specific towns. Larger population centers were ignored. I added the coverage from a favorite iOS app, "Coverage?". It does not indicate who provides roaming, but some phones did.

The ATT GoPhone and Sprint Boost phone in the party didn't allow roaming. See Observations and Summary. Native service is provided by the carrier named. Subsidiaries using the same native service are:

ATT – GoPhone or Cricket.

Sprint – Boost or Virgin.

T-Mobile - MetroPCS.

Verizon – none

Observations

Towns >	Escalante UT	Ely NV	Winnemucca-Lovelock NV	Quincy CA
ATT > C coverage App >	ATT ATT 4G	ATT ATT 4G	roam no connect roam	ATT ATT LTE
Sprint > Coverage App >	0 roam	0 roam	0 0	0 0
T-Mobile > Coverage App >	roam-Commnet roan	roam-ATT roam	T-Mobile 2G T-Mobile LTE?	T-Mobile 2G T-Mobile 2G
Verizon > Coverage App >	Verixon 2G Verizon 2G	Verizon LTE Verizon LTE	Verizon LTE Verizon LTE	Verizon LTE Verizon LTE

Notes – First line is observed on phones. Second line is from app. 4G is 3G+, LTE is true 4G.

Summary:

Commnet – This Company provides roaming to other companies, but has no customers of its own. Besides Escalante and other Southwest locations, they provide the only service in Death Valley at Furnace Creek,

ATT - The ATT phone in the party was a 3G ATT GoPhone. They only work on native ATT signals, not roaming. This phone and a previous 2G/GSM GoPhone showed bars from unusable signals but received a screen error message when calls were placed, usually that only 911 calls are accepted. Before discovering this a few years ago, it was thought that reading bars showed service. It doesn't

Sprint - Native Sprint service on a Boost phone was not at any place tried. Unlike the GoPhone, this phone showed No Service even when roaming was present. A bike rider at Darwin carried a Sprint iPhone. There was no Sprint service so, I asked if he had roaming. He said no, there was an extra charge, even with his contract.

T-Mobile - Most, if not all TMo phones have roaming, only encountered in Escalante and Ely. It was surprising how much native T-Mobile service there was, but mostly 2G. A TMo smartphone with hot spot was used to provide WiFi once for a podcast, but the buffering pauses were extreme.

Verizon - In Escalante where Verizon was weak, 1 or 2 bars, sometimes the phone would lock on Commnet with 4-5 bars, Most Verizon phones show roaming as "Extended". In Winnemucca where Verizon was strong, the phones sometimes momentarily locked on Extended while booting up.