

# Verizon's Transparency Report for the 2nd Half of 2020

Verizon's Transparency Report presents the number of demands we received from law enforcement in the United States and other countries where we did business during the second half of 2020

## United States Report

The table below sets out the number of subpoenas, orders, warrants, and emergency requests that we received from federal, state, or local law enforcement in the United States during the second half of 2020. The table presents data for the past three years. Data from prior periods can be found by clicking the "Archive" tab at the top of the page.

The vast majority of these demands relate to our consumer customers; we receive relatively few demands regarding our enterprise customers. We do not release customer information unless authorized by law, such as a valid law enforcement demand or an appropriate request in an emergency involving the danger of death or serious physical injury.

The total number and types of demands we receive continues to be fairly stable as compared to prior six-month periods. We have generally been seeing an increase in the number of warrants and a decrease in the number of general orders. (We refer to a "general order" as any order other than a pen register, trap and trace, wiretap, or warrant.) That is due in part to the Supreme Court requiring law enforcement to demonstrate probable cause before obtaining location information. We have moved to a new system for tracking legal process, which we believe will help us to report with more accuracy and to avoid the double counting of orders that we believe occurred in prior Transparency Reports.

### Law Enforcement Demands for Customer Data — United States

	1H 2017	2H 2017	1H 2018	2H 2018	1H 2019	2H 2019	1H 2020	2H 2020
<b>Subpoenas</b>	68,237	61,211	69,596	64,017	68,192	64,136	66,773	59,264
<b>General Orders</b>	24,448	24,767	21,520	20,614	19,269	12,586	5,760	4,062
<b>Pen Register/ Trap &amp; Traces</b>	3,241	3,383	3,787	3,163	3,753	3,866	3,721	4,492
<b>Wiretaps</b>	722	691	645	586	585	525	612	627
<b>Warrants</b>	10,721	10,631	13,552	14,543	13,870	18,721	16,818	15,061
<b>Emergency Requests</b>	27,478	28,125	31,239	33,001	30,365	33,518	34,868	37,760

<b>From Law Enforcement</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>134,847</b>	<b>128,808</b>	<b>140,339</b>	<b>135,924</b>	<b>136,034</b>	<b>133,352</b>	<b>128,552</b>	<b>121,266</b>

We also received National Security Letters and Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Orders, which we address in a separate table at the bottom of this Transparency Report.

Verizon has teams that carefully review each demand we receive. We do not produce information in response to all demands we receive. During the second half of 2020, we did not release records in response to 11% of the demands we received. Specifically, we did not release records in response to approximately 10% of the subpoenas we received and approximately 13% of the warrants and orders we received. We may decline to release records for a number of reasons. In some instances, including situations when a different type of legal process is needed for the type of information requested, the legal demand is invalid and therefore rejected. Often, we receive valid demands that seek information about a phone number serviced by a different provider, meaning that we have no records to produce. Likewise, we regularly receive demands seeking data that we do not possess. This includes situations where the data sought is of a type that we do not collect or is older than our retention period. (Note, in prior Transparency Reports, we indicated only the percentage of demands that we rejected as invalid. We now report more broadly to include the percentage of demands where no records were released. As explained, there are many reasons why we may not produce records, even when the demand is valid.)

## Subpoenas

We received 59,264 subpoenas from law enforcement in the United States during the second half of 2020. We are required by law to provide the information requested by a valid subpoena. The subpoenas we receive are generally used by law enforcement to obtain “subscriber information,” meaning the type of information that appears on a customer’s phone bill. We continue to see that approximately half of the subpoenas we receive seek only subscriber information. Those subpoenas typically require us to provide only the name and address of the customer associated with a given phone number or IP address. Other subpoenas may ask for certain transactional information, such as the phone numbers that a given customer called. The types of information that we can provide in response to a subpoena are limited by law. We do not release the contents of communications (such as text messages or emails) or cell site location information in response to a subpoena.

During the second half of 2020, the 59,264 subpoenas we received sought information regarding 120,264 information points, such as telephone numbers, used to identify customers. These customer identifiers are also known as “selectors.” On average, each subpoena sought information about 2.0 selectors. The number of selectors is usually greater than the number of customer accounts. For instance, if a customer had multiple telephone numbers, then it is possible that a subpoena requesting information about multiple selectors was actually seeking information about only one customer. During the second half of 2020, approximately 70% of the subpoenas we received sought information on only one selector (and thus only one customer), and about 90% sought information regarding three or fewer selectors (and thus three or fewer customers).

## Orders

A court order must be signed by a judge and must indicate that the law enforcement officer has made the proper showing required under the law. An order compels us to provide some type of information to the government. We do not provide law enforcement any content (such as text messages or emails) in response to an order.

*General Orders.* Most of the 4,062 orders we received during the second half of 2020 were “general orders.” We use the term “general order” to refer to any order that is not a wiretap order, a pen register order, a trap and trace order, or a warrant. We continue to see that many of these general orders require us to release the same basic types of information that could also be released pursuant to a subpoena.

*“Pen/Traps” and Wiretaps.* We received 5,119 demands during the second half of 2020 that required us to provide access to data in real-time. These are commonly referred to as pen register orders, trap and trace orders, or wiretap orders, although an increasing number of these requests are now being captioned as warrants. A pen register order requires us to provide law enforcement with real-time access to phone numbers as they are dialed, while a trap and trace order compels us to provide law enforcement with real-time access to the phone numbers from incoming calls.

We received 4,492 orders to assist with pen registers or trap and traces during the second half of 2020, although generally a single demand is issued to establish both a pen register and a trap and trace. Far less often, we are required to assist with wiretaps, where law enforcement accesses the content of a communication as it is taking place. We received 627 orders for wiretaps during the second half of 2020.

## **Warrants**

We received 15,061 warrants during the second half of 2020. To obtain a warrant, a law enforcement officer must show a judge that there is “probable cause” to believe that the evidence sought is related to a crime. This is a higher standard than what is required for a general order. A warrant may be used to obtain stored content (such as text message content or email content), location information, or more basic subscriber or transactional information.

During the second half of 2020, we received a total of 19,123 general orders and warrants. They sought data regarding 35,876 information points, such as telephone numbers, used to identify customers. These customer identifiers are also known as “selectors.” On average, each order or warrant sought information about 1.9 selectors. The number of selectors is usually greater than the number of customer accounts. For instance, if a customer had multiple telephone numbers, then it is possible that an order or warrant seeking information about multiple selectors was actually seeking information about only one customer. During the second half of 2020, about 75% of the orders and warrants we received sought information on only one selector (and thus only one customer), and 90% sought information regarding three or fewer selectors (and thus three or fewer customers).

## **Content and Location Information**

*Content.* We are compelled to provide the contents of communications to law enforcement relatively infrequently. Under the law, law enforcement may seek communications or other content that a customer may store through our services, such as text messages or emails. Verizon only releases such stored content to law enforcement with a probable cause warrant. We do not produce stored content in response to a general order or subpoena. During the second half of 2020, we received 8,478 warrants for stored content.

*Location information.* During the second half of 2020, we received 13,678 warrants based on probable cause for location data. In addition, we received 1,469 warrants or court orders for “cell tower dumps” during the second half of 2020. In attempting to identify a suspect of a crime, the government may apply to a court for a warrant or order compelling us to provide a “dump” of the phone numbers of all devices that connected to a specific cell tower or site during a given period of time.

## **Emergency Requests**

Law enforcement may request information from Verizon that is needed to help resolve serious emergencies. We are authorized by federal law to provide the requested information during such emergencies, and we have an established process for responding to these emergency requests in accordance with the law. To request data during these emergencies, a law enforcement officer must certify in writing that there is an emergency involving the danger of death or serious physical injury to a person that requires disclosure without delay. These emergency requests are made in

response to active violent crimes, bomb threats, hostage situations, kidnappings, and fugitive scenarios, often presenting life-threatening situations. In addition, many emergency requests are submitted in search and rescue settings or when law enforcement is trying to locate a missing child or elderly person.

We also receive emergency requests for information from Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) regarding particular 9-1-1 calls from the public. Calls for emergency services, such as police, fire or ambulance, are answered in call centers, or PSAPs, throughout the country. PSAPs receive tens of millions of calls from 9-1-1 callers each year, and certain information about the calls (name and address for wireline callers, or phone numbers and available location information for wireless callers) is typically made available to the PSAP when a 9-1-1 call is made. Yet a small percentage of the time, PSAP officials may need to contact the telecom provider to get information that was not automatically communicated by virtue of the 9-1-1 call or by the 9-1-1 caller.

During the second half of 2020, we received 37,760 emergency requests for information from law enforcement in emergency matters involving the danger of death or serious physical injury. During that same period, we also received 12,792 emergency requests from PSAPs related to particular 9-1-1 calls from the public for emergency services.

## National Security Demands

The table below sets forth the number of national security demands that we received during the applicable period. Under Section 603 of the USA Freedom Act, we are now able to report the number of these demands in bands of 500.

	Jan. 1, 2017– June 30, 2017	July 1, 2017–Dec. 31, 2017	Jan. 1, 2018– June 30, 2018	July 1, 2018– Dec. 31, 2018	Jan. 1, 2019– June 30, 2019	July 1, 2019– Dec. 31, 2019	Jan. 1, 2020–June 30, 2020	July 1, 2020–Dec. 31, 2020
<b>National Security Letters</b>	1-499	501-999	2-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499
<b>Number of customer selectors</b>	1500-1999	1500-1999	2000-2499	2000-2499	1500-1999	3500-3999	1000-1499	1000-1499
<b>FISA Orders (Content)</b>	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	*
<b>Number of customer selectors</b>	1500-1999	2000-2499	2000-2499	1500-1999	1000-1499	1000-1499	1000-1499	*

<b>FISA Orders (Non-Content)</b>	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	*
<b>Number of customer selectors</b>	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	0-499	*

\* The government has imposed a six month delay for reporting this data.

## National Security Letters

During the second half of 2020, we received between 0 and 499 NSLs from the FBI. Those NSLs sought information regarding between 1,000 and 1,499 “selectors” used to identify customers. The government uses the term “customer selector” to refer to an identifier (most often a telephone number) that specifies a given customer. The number of selectors is generally greater than the number of “customer accounts.” (If an NSL asked for the names associated with two different telephone numbers, then we would count them as two selectors, even if both phone numbers were assigned to the same customer account.) The FBI may seek only limited categories of information through an NSL: name, address, length of service, and toll billing records. Verizon does not release any other information, such as content or location information, in response to an NSL.

NSLs typically prohibit the recipient, such as Verizon, from disclosing to any other person that the NSL was received or that the recipient provided information in response to it. Until recently, these non-disclosure requirements applied indefinitely. The USA Freedom Act, however, required the FBI to periodically review if each NSL recipient could be relieved of the non-disclosure requirements. To that end, we have recently received three letters from the FBI advising that the non-disclosure requirement of three NSLs (received in September 2017, October 2019, and November 2019) are no longer applicable.

We therefore can now disclose that we complied with each NSL by providing the name, address, dates of service, and/or toll billing records, as authorized by the relevant statute. The November 2019 NSL sought information regarding four customer selectors; the other two NSLs sought information regarding one selector each.

## Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Orders

The government requires that we delay reporting our receipt of any orders issued under FISA for six months. Thus, at this time, the most recent FISA information that we may report is for the first half of 2020.

### Content

From January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, we received between 0 and 499 FISA orders for content. Those orders targeted between 1,000 and 1,499 “customer selectors” used to identify Verizon customers.

### Non-content

From January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, we received between 0 and 499 reportable FISA orders for non-content. Some FISA orders that seek content also seek non-content. We counted those as FISA orders for content and, to avoid double counting, have not also counted them as FISA orders for non-content. Those orders targeted between 0 and 499 “customer selectors.”