

Verizon Wireless Urges Georgians to Learn How to Protect Themselves from Sexual Assault

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Company Offers Tips and Tools to Protect From Harassment via Cell Phones

ALPHARETTA, Ga., April 2, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Verizon Wireless urges Georgians to learn how they can protect themselves from unwanted advancements via wireless technology. College-aged women and teens are particularly at risk for these types of assaults. According to industry research, 40 percent of teens say they have been exposed to some kind of inappropriate or negative activity from others on their cell phone. College-age women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted than the general public, with an estimated one in four female college students becoming victims of sexual assault during their college career, according to studies from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Because sexual assault is an issue of significant concern on college campuses throughout the state, Verizon Wireless is working during the month of April with various colleges in Georgia to raise awareness of sexual assault via the Red Flag Campaign, a program that was created by students for students and funded by Verizon Foundation, Verizon Wireless and other community partners. The program was created using a "bystander intervention" strategy, encouraging friends and other campus community members to "say something" when they see warning signs ("red flags") for dating violence in a friend's relationship.

Generally, Verizon Wireless offers Georgia's wireless customers these tips to protect themselves:

Don't:

- Log in with user names that reveal true identity or that are provocative
- Reveal your passwords to anyone
- Reveal phone numbers or addresses to strangers
- Post information that reveals your identity
- Post photos that may reveal your identity (for example: city or club names on shirts)
- Open attachments from strangers
- Send any pictures or statements that you are uncomfortable sending

Do:

- Create strong passwords
- Remember it's OK to turn off your phone
- Remember you have the right to be alone and spend time with friends and family without your partner getting angry
- Know your privacy settings
- Be mindful when using check-ins like Facebook Places and Foursquare
- Tell someone, such as a counselor or campus health official, if you are being harassed. Consumers can also contact the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) for confidential help by dialing 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or simply by dialing #HOPE (#4673) from any Verizon Wireless phone.

Safeguards

To further help protect its customers from sexual assault via cell phone, Verizon Wireless offers these safeguards as part of the company's available wireless communication services:

- Blocked Numbers
- Content Filters
- Call and Message Blocking
- Internet Spam Blocking
- Usage Controls
 - Set allowances and receive status updates for voice, text, pix, video and internet
 - Employ content filters
 - Create lists of "trusted" and "blocked" numbers
 - Family Locator (GPS locator) with safe zone capabilities

"Digital dating abuse can come in many forms, including harassment through constant calling or texting. One way to safeguard against this is to keep your passwords private, learn how to block certain phone numbers, or let your partner know that you feel uncomfortable with his/her actions," said Jonathan LeCompte, Verizon Wireless Georgia/Alabama region president. "At Verizon Wireless we want young people to empower themselves with knowledge to make good choices while enjoying all the advantages that modern technology has to offer."

"As empowering as it can be to own a cell phone, it's critical that companies in the wireless space recognize how their technology can be used to harass and abuse. Educating teens about digital dating abuse is a strategic goal of our organization. We applaud Verizon Wireless for all the work they do educating the public about this important issue and the tools they offer to keep their customers safe from harm," said Meagan Fulmer, president and CEO of Partnership Against Domestic Violence (PADV).

Illustrating the growth of this important issue, PADV's Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program is experiencing a 63 percent increase year-over-year with 11,834 teens, educators and adults attending PADV's events compared to 2,015 teens, educators and adults attending events the previous year. These events focus on talking about healthy relationships and how they are defined. Technology abuse is addressed in both the presentations and the six week in-school curriculum that PADV provides. For more information and to get help for an abusive relationship, PADV's hotline can be reached at 404-873-1766.

About Verizon Wireless

Verizon Wireless operates the nation's largest 4G LTE network and largest, most reliable 3G network. The company serves 108.7 million total wireless connections, including 92.2 million retail customers.

Headquartered in Basking Ridge, N.J., with nearly 82,000 employees nationwide, Verizon Wireless is a joint venture of Verizon Communications (NYSE, NASDAQ: VZ) and Vodafone (LSE, NASDAQ: VOD). For more information, visit www.verizonwireless.com. To preview and request broadcast-quality video footage and high-resolution stills of Verizon Wireless operations, log on to the Verizon Wireless Multimedia Library at www.verizonwireless.com/multimedia.

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