

What is Amazon Sidewalk, and how to opt out

By [Mike Prospero](#), [Ian Morris](#) 9 days ago



(Image credit: Amazon)

Amazon is launching its Wi-Fi sharing system, called Sidewalk, nationwide in the U.S. on June 8. That means if you own a Ring doorbell or Amazon Echo the company will share a small portion of your internet bandwidth with other devices nearby. It's aimed at making sure

Amazon's devices are able to be online even if, say, your broadband goes down as well as allowing access to devices outside of the normal range of your Wi-Fi.

Amazon's selling this as a way to ensure that smart home devices can be reached more easily as well as allowing Amazon to offer certain customer support for those devices even when they've dropped off your network.

Not sure how Sidewalk can impact your gear? Here's our explainer on what Amazon Sidewalk is, what devices it works with, and how to opt out.

What is Amazon Sidewalk?

Amazon Sidewalk is the name of Amazon's wireless network, which is designed to connect low-power, long-range, low-data devices to the Internet. The technology, built into all Echo devices made after 2018, creates a wireless network that should reach from your house all the way to the — you guessed it — sidewalk.

It's designed so that devices like keyfinders and outdoor lights, which can't directly connect to Wi-

Fi, will be able to transmit their status to the cloud and receive information in return. As an example, let's say you have a Sidewalk-enabled keyfinder (like a [Tile Pro](#)) on your dog, who goes missing. With a Bluetooth-only enabled Tile, you'd have to wait until he gets in range of another Bluetooth device in order for you to get an alert. Because Sidewalk is built into most new Amazon Echo smart speakers, anytime your dog walks past a house with one of those Alexa-enabled speakers, you would be able to track his location.

How does Amazon Sidewalk work?

Amazon Sidewalk uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) and part of the 900 MHz spectrum to transmit data. In May 2020, the [FCC opened up the 900MHz spectrum for broadband use](#); previously, this had been reserved for such devices as cordless phones.

Similar to other low-power, low-bandwidth protocols such as Zigbee, Z-Wave, and Thread, Sidewalk is designed to link devices that don't

have Wi-Fi and don't require a lot of data — such as door and window sensors — to connect to the internet. Similar to those other protocols, Sidewalk has a larger range than Wi-Fi — in theory, [up to 1,500 feet](#), according to GridConnect.

That means you can have sensors scattered throughout your yard. Or if you have a detached garage, for example, you can monitor if its door is opened or closed without having to extend your Wi-Fi signal. Another example is that if you have a key finder that works with Sidewalk, it will be potentially much easier to find compared to one with just Bluetooth connectivity.

However, like Zigbee and Z-Wave devices, in order for Sidewalk-enabled devices to connect to the cloud, they first need to connect to a bridge, something found in the [best smart home hubs](#). Starting June 8, Sidewalk-compatible Amazon Echo devices will receive an update that, among other things, will allow them to continue functioning as a Sidewalk hub even if your Wi-Fi goes down.

The nature of Sidewalk means that it won't just be your devices connecting to your Sidewalk Bridge. Any device that's Sidewalk-enabled can, in theory, connect to your Bridge to transmit its data to the cloud. On its Sidewalk page, Amazon states that a Sidewalk Bridge uses a maximum of 80Kbps, and that Amazon caps the amount of data used by Sidewalk at 500MB.

What devices use Amazon Sidewalk?

As Amazon Sidewalk is relatively new, there aren't too many devices outside of those made by Amazon that are Sidewalk-enabled.

Sidewalk devices fall into two categories: Bridges and Sidewalk-enabled devices. Every Amazon Echo smart speaker and smart display made since 2018 can act as a Sidewalk Bridge, including ones that are no longer for sale:

- [Amazon Echo \(3rd Gen\)](#)
- [Amazon Echo \(4th Gen\)](#)
- [Amazon Echo Dot \(3rd Gen\)](#)
- [Amazon Echo Dot \(4th Gen\)](#)
- Amazon Echo Dot (3rd Gen) for Kids

- Amazon Echo Dot (4th Gen) for Kids
- Amazon Echo Dot with Clock (3rd Gen)
- [Amazon Echo Dot with Clock \(4th Gen\)](#)
- [Amazon Echo Plus](#) (1st Gen)
- [Amazon Echo Plus \(2nd Gen\)](#)
- Amazon Echo Show (1st Gen)
- [Amazon Echo Show \(2nd Gen\)](#)
- [Amazon Echo Show 5](#)
- [Amazon Echo Show 8](#)
- [Amazon Echo Show 10](#)
- [Amazon Echo Spot](#)
- [Amazon Echo Studio](#)
- [Amazon Echo Input](#)
- Amazon Echo Flex

In addition, the [Ring Floodlight Cam](#) (2019), Ring Spotlight Cam Wired (2019), and the Ring Spotlight Cam Mount (2019) can also act as Sidewalk bridges. The new Ring Floodlight Cam Wired Pro will also have this feature soon.

Sidewalk-enabled devices, which can transmit and receive data from bridges, are fewer in number. In fact, there's only two at the moment, and both aren't fully functional.



(Image credit: Tom's Guide)

Tile trackers

When Amazon announced Sidewalk in September of 2020, it introduced Tile — which makes some of the [best key finders](#) — as one of its early partners. Starting on June 14, this capability will be enabled, allowing Echo devices to locate Tile trackers.



(Image credit: Tom's Guide)

Level smart locks

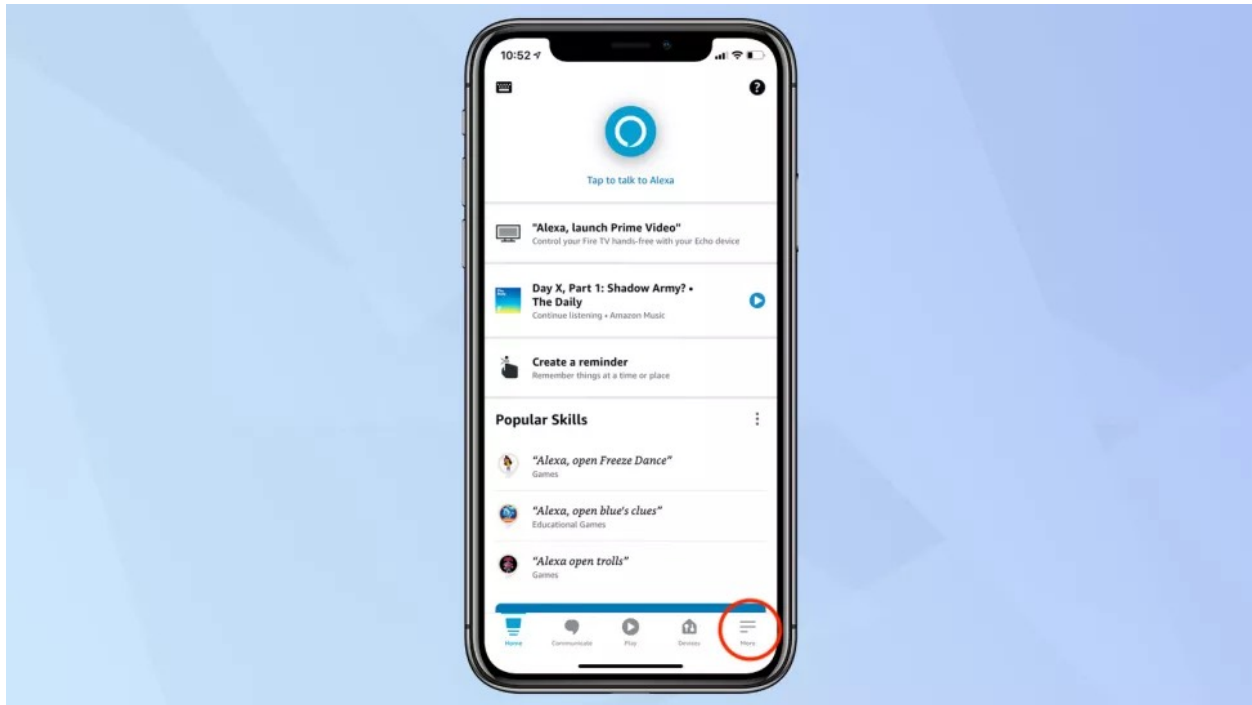
Level smart locks will be able to connect to Sidewalk via the [Ring Video Doorbell Pro \(2nd gen\)](#), which will allow owners to control the lock through the Ring app. (In the future, the lock will work with additional devices.) One of the previous limitations of the [Level Bolt](#) and Level Touch is that they were only compatible with [HomeKit](#), so this will open things up a bit. This capability will be active by the end of May.

Can I opt out of Amazon Sidewalk?

As mentioned above, Sidewalk is essentially an open network. That means that any device that is Sidewalk-enabled can connect to your Sidewalk bridge. However, those devices don't have unfettered access to your Wi-Fi network — no one's going to be watching Netflix using your Wi-Fi — nor can you see what devices are connected to your Sidewalk bridge. Additionally, any information that's sent via Sidewalk Bridges is encrypted.

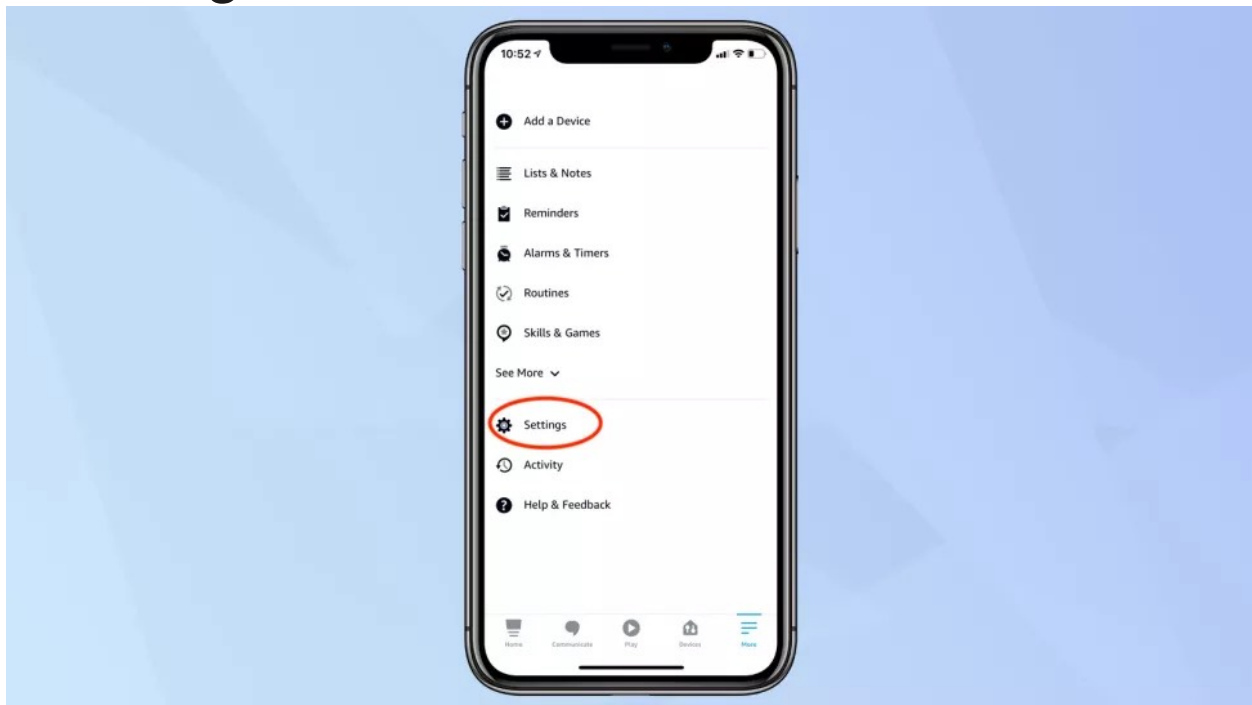
However, if you're uncomfortable with the idea of others using your network, you can opt to turn off Sidewalk. You can't selectively turn off Sidewalk for specific devices; rather, you can only activate or deactivate it for all Echo and Ring devices linked to your account.

How to opt out of Amazon Sidewalk



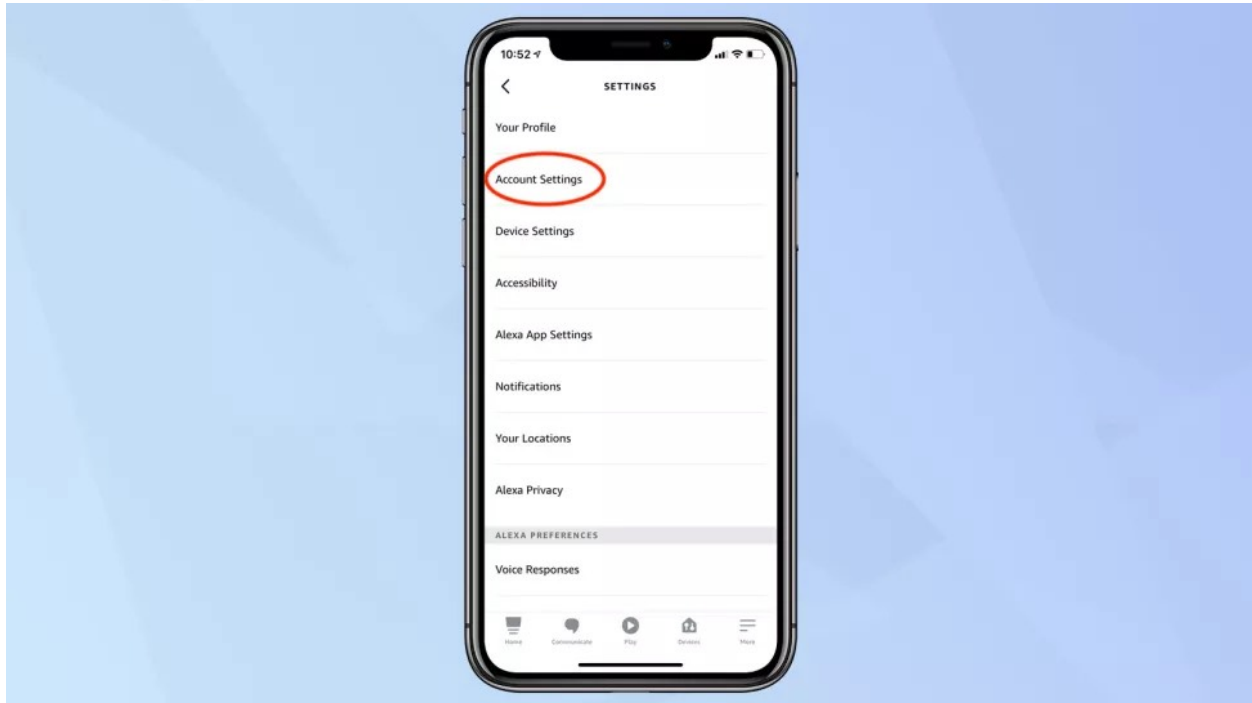
(Image credit: Amazon)

1. Open the Alexa app on your Android or iOS device, and select the More button in the lower right.



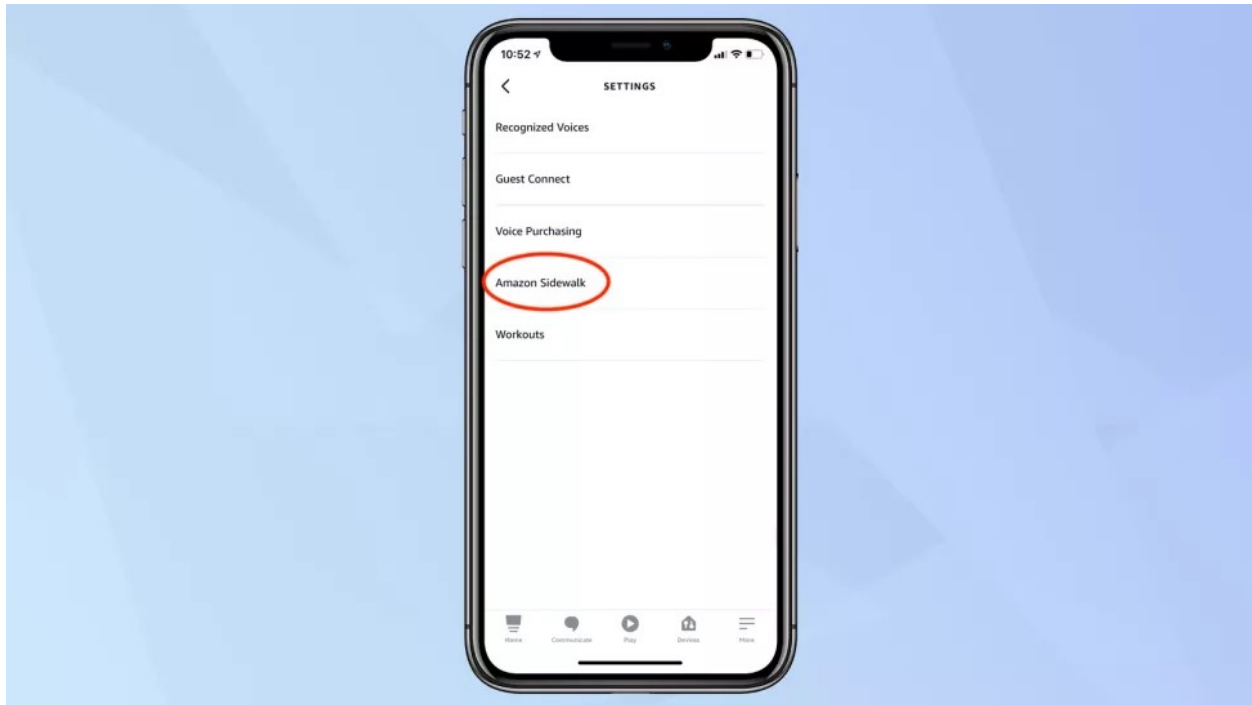
(Image credit: Amazon)

2. Select the Settings button in the next screen that appears.



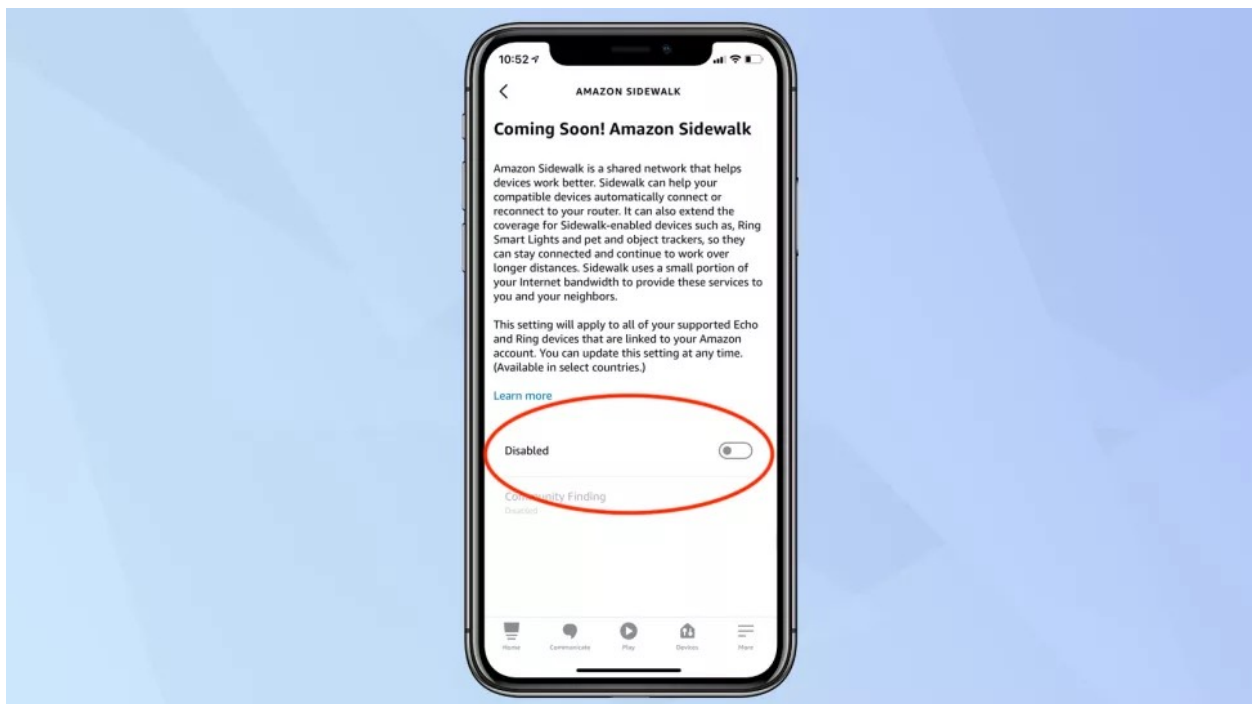
(Image credit: Amazon)

3. Select Account Settings in the next screen.



(Image credit: Amazon)

4. Select Amazon Sidewalk.



(Image credit: Amazon)

5. If you want to turn off Amazon Sidewalk, change the slider to Disabled

To help neighbors find things like lost keys, a Community Finding feature will share the approximate location of your Echo and Ring devices, so that it's easier for the person looking for a lost kitty to better locate their pet. You can also disable this feature by selecting Community Finding, and then switching the slider to Off.

Today's best Amazon Echo Show 10 (3rd Gen) deals