

MTS and VimpelCom to Start Selling New iPhones This Week

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Mobile phone operators MTS and VimpelCom said they would start selling Apple's new iPhone models Oct. 25, with VimpelCom the country's only carrier to sign a direct sales contract with the U.S. company so far.

MTS and VimpelCom as well as their peer MegaFon — which account for 82 percent of all Russian mobile subscribers between them — earlier this year failed to renew their contracts on direct sales of iPhones in Russia as Apple would not soften its contract terms.

The operators were deterred by the fact that Russia does not allow subsidies for handsets, making the phones too expensive for the average customer, while market sources say the U.S. firm required the carriers to guarantee certain sales volumes and marketing support.

Of the three carriers, only VimpelCom has so far signed a direct contract with Apple to sell the 5s and 5c iPhone models. The company did not disclose the terms of the deal, which was

announced Tuesday.

Unlike VimpelCom, MTS will purchase the smartphones from distributors, MTS said in a statement, although it did not rule out the possibility of signing a direct contract in the future. Its previous contract with Apple ended in September 2012.

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