



A Consumer Guide to Broadband

The Department of Public Service has put together this pamphlet to provide guidance on how to maximize your broadband speed, how to keep use of your broadband secure, and how to figure out how much speed you may need based on your use.

How much speed do you need?

From the FCC's [Household Broadband Guide](#):

Users/devices	Light Use (Basic functions: email Browsing, basic video, VoIP, Internet radio)	Moderate Use (Basic functions plus <i>one</i> high-demand application: streaming HD video; multiparty video, conferencing; online gaming; telecommuting)	High Use (Basic functions plus <i>more than one</i> high- demand application running at the same time)
1 user/1 device	Basic	Basic	Medium
2 users or devices at a time	Basic	Medium	Medium/Advanced
3 users or devices at a time	Medium	Medium	Advanced
4 users or devices at a time	Medium	Advanced	Advanced
<i>Basic service = 3 to 8 Mbps Medium Service = 12 to 25 Mbps Advanced Service = 25+ Mbps</i>			

Also, check with your internet service provider to see what speed of service is recommended for your broadband use and devices.



Tips to increase speed

- Disable WiFi on devices that you're not using
- Ensure your router is close to the device you're using and not blocked by walls, furniture, etc.
- Reboot/reset your router (do this at least 30 minutes before any video meeting or critical internet need)
- Upgrade your router if need be, and make sure the router software is updated as directed
- Limit the number of people using broadband devices at the same time
- If you need to video conference for work or medical services, make sure no one else is streaming Hulu, Netflix, etc., at the same time



- Turn off services that connect to the Cloud that you're not using
- Use a WiFi booster
- Dedicate a device to video meetings only, so that device is not running other programs in the background
- Check your speeds by using an online speed test
- Upgrade your broadband service with your provider if possible
- A good computer anti-virus program can keep data-hogging viruses out of your devices. Check with your provider to see if they offer a free anti virus subscription
- Unless unplugged, digital assistants from Google and Amazon, WiFi cameras and thermostats, and other smart home devices are "always on," using some bandwidth

Helpful links:

- [Bad WiFi is Slowing You Down](#)
- [Simple Steps for Safe Online Learning](#)

Security suggestions and reminders



- Don't access bank accounts or use personally identifying information (e.g., social security numbers) when using open/unsecured networks (those that don't require a password or login)
- Only use secured public networks when accessing or transmitting personally identifying information or account numbers (those that require a password/login or to agree to legal terms)
- Don't leave your laptop, tablet, or smartphone unattended while in a public place
- Turn off automatic connectivity when in public places, which will prevent automatically connecting to networks you don't normally use
- Don't shop online when using public WiFi or an unsecured network
- Be wary of having to give out too much personally identifying information when accessing a public WiFi hotspot
- If you can, use a Virtual Private Network on your device if using public WiFi

Contact Us

You can contact the Department of Public Service about utility-related or broadband complaints, questions or concerns:

Write

Consumer Affairs & Public Information
Vermont Department of Public Service
112 State St., Montpelier, VT 05620-2601

Call

800-622-4496

Email

psd.consumer@vermont.gov

Online portal at:

<https://capi.epsd.vermont.gov/?q=node/51>