

Explore Contents



Network management practices



How does T-Mobile manage data on its network?

We engineer our network to provide consistent high-speed data service, but at times and at locations where the number of customers using the network exceeds available network resources, customers will experience reduced data speeds. To provide the best possible experience for the most possible customers on their T-Mobile-branded plans, we implement network management practices on a content-agnostic basis. Examples include caching less data, prioritizing data usage of non-Heavy Data Users, and video optimization. Some business and government plans also offer customers the choice of content filtering for heavy-usage video and gaming sites and applications. See plans for details. These practices do not discriminate against offerings that might compete against those offered by T-Mobile or any T-Mobile affiliate on the basis of such competition.

T-Mobile also addresses the priority needs of emergency communications, law enforcement, public safety, critical infrastructure, or national security authorities, consistent with or as permitted by applicable law. This may impact other users' service during times of congestion, such as during a natural disaster or other emergency.

How is data prioritized on the network?

We prioritize network data by plan and brand to deliver a range of customer choice points at great values. Data for customers on most T-Mobile-branded plans is prioritized before the data of customers on Essentials plans and Metro by T-Mobile or Assurance Wireless-branded plans. Mobile internet plans currently offered after with 30GB or more data per month, and Project 10Million, and some other education-focused mobile internet plans are prioritized next. The vast majority of customers on T-Mobile-branded, Metro by T-Mobile-branded, and Assurance Wireless-branded plans receive higher priority than Mobile Wireless customers who are Heavy Data Users on their rate plan – who are prioritized with our T-Mobile Home Internet customers after exceeding the relevant threshold for the current billing cycle. In general, T-Mobile Internet customers receive the same network prioritization as Mobile Wireless Heavy Data Users. As of May 8, 2024, T-Mobile Internet customers who exceed 1.2TB of data usage for the current billing cycle are Internet Heavy Data Users who will be prioritized last on the network. For plans where Internet equipment is intended to be stationary and is only available in limited areas (for example, Home Internet and Home Internet Plus), these customers should be less likely to notice congestion in general.

Where the network is lightly loaded in relation to available capacity, a customer whose data is prioritized higher than other traffic will notice little, if any, effect from having higher priority. This will be the case in the vast majority of times and locations. Customers may notice reduced speeds in comparison to customers with a higher priority during network congestion. At times and at locations where the network is heavily loaded in relation to available capacity, these customers will likely see significant reductions in data speeds, especially if they are engaged in data-intensive activities. Customers should be aware that these practices may occasionally result in speeds below those typically experienced on our 5G or 4G networks, including a greater likelihood of reduced speeds in the lower end of the speed ranges. Depending on the extent of network congestion, these customers may notice more frequent impacts to some video streaming, file downloads, and other high-bandwidth activities. T-Mobile constantly works to improve network performance and capacity, but there are physical and technical limits on how much capacity is available. In constrained locations the frequency of heavy loading in relation to available capacity may be greater than in other locations. When network loading goes down or the customer moves to a location that is less heavily loaded in relation to available capacity, the customer's speeds will likely improve.

Additionally, T-Mobile offers other services to its customers that use the same network infrastructure and resources as its broadband internet access services and are given priority over other traffic on the network. These other services currently include calling-related services like Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP), Voice over new radio (VoNR), Voice over LTE (VoLTE), Video over LTE (ViLTE), and data priority for [Wireless Priority Service](#). More services may be added, such as to serve other public safety needs or organizations designated by the Department of Homeland Security for critical infrastructure. These services may affect the availability of network resources for broadband internet access services and enterprise offerings, which may be noticeable in times of congestion. Similarly, [Wireless Priority Service](#) traffic may preempt other traffic during times of extreme congestion, which means that, in rare cases, we may interrupt an active data or voice session to support public safety or critical infrastructure needs.

What is a Heavy Data User?

To provide the best possible experience and minimize capacity issues and degradation in network performance for the most possible customers, we manage significant high-speed data usage on the vast majority of our plans through prioritization. Heavy Data Users (as defined by a customer's rate plan) will have their data usage prioritized below the data usage (including tethering) of other customers at times and at locations where there are competing customer demands for network resources. This may result in slower data speeds. At the start of the next bill cycle, the customer's usage status is reset, and this data traffic is no longer prioritized below other traffic. Customers who use data in violation of their Rate Plan terms or T-Mobile's Terms and Conditions may be excluded from this calculation. Data features that may not count against the high-speed data

allotment for some plans, such as certain data associated with Music Freedom, or Binge On, still count towards all customers' usage for this calculation. Smartphone Mobile HotSpot (tethering) data is also included in this calculation. Data used for customer service applications, such as the T-Mobile My Account app does not count towards customers' usage for this calculation. To help avoid application of this practice, and reduce mobile data consumption, customers can set automatic updating of apps, podcasts, and file downloads to run off Wi-Fi (Make sure to connect to Wi-Fi to update applications and system periodically).

For most T-Mobile-branded rate plans, a "Heavy Data User" is defined as a customer using more than a set amount of data on a billing cycle (generally 50GB or 100GB). As of May 8, 2024, T-Mobile Internet customers using more than 1.2TB of data in a billing cycle are also considered Heavy Data Users. The threshold number is periodically evaluated across our rate plans and brands to manage network traffic and deliver a good experience to all customers while offering a range of customer choices. You can always check the threshold amount for a rate plan by speaking with a representative, review our rate cards on [T-Mobile.com](https://www.t-mobile.com), or by logging in to my.t-mobile.com, or the T-Mobile app. Your total "on-network data" is the number used for purposes of heavy data usage prioritization. The term "Heavy Data User" does not apply to customers on Go5G Next, Go5G Plus, and Magenta MAX plans (a customer choice we are offering as we explore the expanding capacity of our 5G network), or on a small number of T-Mobile-branded business and government-oriented plans, which are not subject to a threshold.

What can I expect if I choose a rate plan WITHOUT unlimited data?

To deliver a range of customer choices, T-Mobile continues to offer a small number of rate plans that allow customers to select a limited amount of high-speed on-device data instead of unlimited. On these plans, if your total high-speed data usage exceeds your selected high-speed allotment during a billing cycle, we reduce your data speed to 2G speeds (for most plans, 128 kbps) for the remainder of that billing cycle.

Customers on some limited high-speed plans may still have extremely high data usage and be Heavy Data Users under certain circumstances, including if their plan enables access to significant amounts of data that does not count against their high-speed data allotment. Certain features, such as Music Freedom and some Binge On content on qualifying rate plans, data used by certain T-Mobile customer service applications, such as the T-Mobile App, and the federal telehealth VA Video Connect app, do not count against high-speed data allotments when detected by our network. While T-Mobile continues to expand its network capacity, some network management for these scenarios is still required because very heavy data usage at times and places of competing network demands can affect the network performance for other customers.

What do I need to know about video optimization?

T-Mobile uses streaming video optimization technology. Streaming video optimization improves overall data usage management of the network, resulting in greater network speeds and throughput for other customers using data because less network payload is dedicated to video. For customers on limited high-speed plans, optimization also helps customers stretch their high-speed data while streaming video. For video that is not self-optimized by the video provider, we adjust the delivery rate for streaming video, which causes the video to be delivered in lower resolutions and to use less data.

Video optimization occurs only for data streams that are identified by our packet-core network as video or where the video provider has chosen to establish protocols to self-optimize its video. Some videos, like those consumed via VPN, Apple Private Relay, or while tethering, may be difficult to identify as video and therefore cannot be optimized. The streaming video optimization process applies to content identified as video, regardless of the content itself or the website that provides it. While many changes to streaming video files are likely to be indiscernible, the optimization process may impact the appearance of the streaming video as displayed on a user's device. In some instances, video optimization may also identify and treat downloads of video files as if they were video streams. However, T-Mobile offers content providers a way to opt-in to a protocol to help identify video downloads to ensure they are not treated as streaming video.

Video streaming optimization, when connected to the cellular network, delivers a SD-quality (up to 2.5 Mbps) video experience instead of a higher resolution version (e.g. HD, typically 1080p or Ultra HD, max 4K), which is better suited for larger screens. Video optimization is not applied when a device is using Wi-Fi to connect to a non-T-Mobile network.

Customers can choose plans where SD-quality video optimization is always enabled, or may choose to activate and enable a feature or plan where video streams at speeds that provide up to UHD video capability (max 4K), in the United States. Some of our customers are on data plans that include video optimization as a customer-controlled feature called "Binge On," which customers may choose to disable and re-enable at any time. Some video providers may choose to self-optimize their video content or opt-out of the Binge On program ([see listing](#)). The Binge On optimization technology is not applied to the video services of these providers and high-speed data consumption will continue as if Binge On were not enabled.

Additional information, including technical criteria for content provider participation in the Binge On program or video file download protocol, is found [here](#). Customers who have plans that are no longer for sale may have different video features available and should check www.myT-Mobile.com for more information.

How does T-Mobile manage tethering?

Some high-speed smartphone data plans include a data allotment for Smartphone Mobile HotSpot (tethering). While we permit tethering pursuant to the terms, conditions, and allotments of your data plan, significant tethering usage can affect on-device network performance for all customers. To ensure the best possible on-device experience, and to minimize capacity issues and degradation in network performance, we prioritize on-device data (except that of our currently offered mobile internet plans 30GB or higher, our Project 10Million and some other education-focused mobile internet plans, home broadband, and Heavy Data Users, as described above) over tethering data at times and at locations where there are competing customer demands for network resources, which may result in slower tethering speeds.

Some plans may include maximum speeds for tethering services. Many of our current plans include a set amount of high-speed tethering, after which tethering usage continues at a maximum of 600kbps (3G speeds). The T-Mobile Essentials plan includes tethering at a maximum of 600 kbps. Customers may also choose an add-on feature for a set amount of high-speed tethering data. Depending on the capability of your device, tethering your device to other lawful devices is permitted up to 10 devices, pursuant to the terms, conditions, and allotments of your data plan. Some video consumed while tethering may be difficult to identify as video and therefore cannot be optimized. See your plan for details.

Got questions?

For additional Open Internet disclosures not found on this page, including our Privacy Notice, please review the [Frequently asked questions](#).

[^ Back to top](#)

Connect with T-Mobile Home Internet

[English](#) [Español](#)

Support	Get the app	Consumer guides
Home Internet FAQ	Internet app	The Signal
Setup WiFi Gateway		Get Wifi for less
Emergency Broadband Benefit		WiFi security essentials
		Gaming internet speeds

© 2024 T-Mobile USA, Inc.



[About](#) [Investor relations](#) [Press](#) [Careers](#) [Deutsche Telekom](#) [Puerto Rico](#)
[Privacy Notice](#) [T-Mobile Trust Center](#) [Privacy Center](#) [Consumer information](#) [Public safety/911](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Terms of use](#) [Accessibility](#) [Open Internet](#) [Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information](#)
[Licenses & Patents](#) [Consumer Health Data Privacy Notice](#) [T-Mobile, the T logo, Magenta and the magenta color are registered trademarks of Deutsche Telekom AG.](#)

