

COVID-19: WORKING FROM HOME NETWORK PRIMER AND BEST PRACTICES

Given that so many of us, and you, are already or may soon be working from home, we wanted to share with you some tips from our IT department.

Home networks typically consist of a router that connects two networks together. One side is the broadband connection to the internet as provided by a Cable company. The other side is the wired and wireless connections that allow devices in the home access to the internet through the router.

Given the current push toward remote work and distance learning, please consider the following five best practices when using your home network.

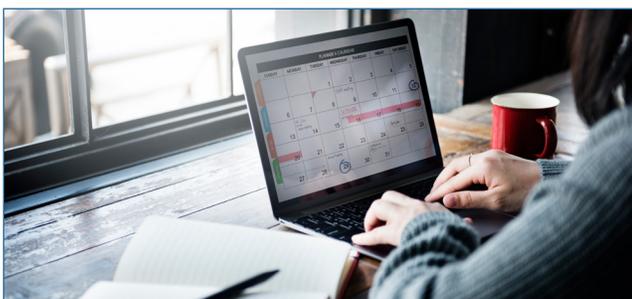
1. THE NUMBER OF CONNECTED HOME DEVICES COUNTS

In today's home, common internet-connected devices include TVs, phones, game consoles, thermostats, as well as smart plugs, lightbulbs, switches, garage doors, and more. Each device competes for the limited available bandwidth within the home.

The more devices on the home network, the more likely congestion will occur, potentially causing poor performance and slow response times when accessing applications. To avoid this, consider the potential impact of limiting the number of connected devices when possible.

2. USE WIRED CONNECTIONS

A home router will typically have Ethernet ports allowing for devices to directly connect. Connecting PCs directly to your home network via an Ethernet cable connected to the router will establish reliable connectivity and can help decrease network drops associated with wireless connections.



3. IF CONNECTED VIA WIRELESS, STAY CLOSE

Wireless connections are susceptible to many variables that will slow down a connection or cause it to drop. One of the biggest culprits is distance from the router. Routers provided by most carriers typically have the strongest on a horizontal plane, meaning you'll have a stronger signal if you are on the same floor as the wireless router.

A stronger signal will allow you to be further away from the router before noticeable slowness occurs. If the home router is on a different floor from the wireless device, you should either move closer to the router or consider installing a mesh network product.

4. COMMON HOME DEVICES CAN REDUCE WIRELESS SIGNAL STRENGTH

Microwave ovens can cause interference with wireless signals, resulting in poor performance and dropped connections. Additionally, stone and concrete walls act as a natural border for wireless environments, so signals will drop off significantly after passing through these types of barriers.

5. STREAMING SERVICES

Video requires a lot of bandwidth to ensure a smooth, high definition picture and immersive experience. Game consoles, TVs, phones, iPads and other devices running any type of video will place extreme demands on your home network.

To ensure optimal performance across your network, limit the number of devices that are running video and audio applications. Doing so could substantially increase your network performance and reliability.