

Consumer Labels for Broadband Services

Comparing broadband service providers' prices, performance and network practices can be challenging, even for savvy consumers. With this in mind, the FCC's rules on Open Internet transparency require providers to convey sufficient information to allow consumers to make an informed choice among available broadband services.

Based on the recommendations of its Consumer Advisory Committee, the FCC issued templates for broadband labels – one for landline and one for mobile – that service providers may use to provide consumers with information about their services. While the FCC's rules do not require providers to use this format, some providers may choose to use them soon. If a provider uses a broadband label template, here's the type of information you can expect to see:

- Pricing details, including all of the various charges that seem mysterious to consumers – overage fees, equipment fees, early termination fees, other monthly fees beyond service fees such as insurance, administrative fees, or regulatory recovery fees.
- Monthly data allowance – namely, the carrier-defined plan limit after which consumers will incur additional charges.
- Broadband speed and other performance metrics.
- Network management practices – namely, precautions providers may take to manage heavy traffic on their networks.

Service providers who use the labels will satisfy the FCC's requirement to make transparency disclosures in the proper format, or a format that meets the needs of consumers. However, providers may still be in violation of FCC rules if the content of their labels is misleading or inaccurate or if they make misleading or inaccurate statements to customers in ads or statements elsewhere. In such cases, consumers can file complaints with the FCC at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>.

The new rules will go into effect later this year, but service providers may begin using the broadband label templates anytime. The labels can serve as a helpful comparison shopping tool for consumers. Look for and consider them when you shop for service.

Broadband consumer disclosure samples

You can download the FCC's templates for broadband labels:

- Fixed Broadband Consumer Disclosure Sample
- Mobile Broadband Consumer Disclosure Sample
- Instructions for Providers to Customize Labels

More information

- Learn more about the Open Internet Transparency Rule at www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/open-internet-transparency-rule
- Background information on the FCC's Open Internet proceedings at www.fcc.gov/general/open-internet

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

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