

WHAT IS THE 95th PERCENTILE?

The 95th percentile is a mathematical calculation widely used to determine billing rates for Internet connections that are provided as “burstable” (variable rate) bandwidth. Essentially, network data samples are collected every few minutes. Two readings are taken of the total bandwidth used over each time period, one outgoing and one incoming. The higher of these two readings is recorded to create a single bps (bits per second) transfer reading.

At the end of each billing cycle, these readings are sorted and the top 5% of these readings are removed. The next highest reading called “the 95th percentile” is the rate at which you are billed.

In many cases usage may be minimal, with all usage falling within the top 5% of the readings. In this case, you are billed for your minimum monthly fee.

HERE IS A SIMPLE EXAMPLE THAT ILLUSTRATES WHAT WE MEAN

Over a period of 500 minutes, 100 readings are taken of both incoming and outgoing traffic. Assuming the billing period is also 500 minutes, then top 5% of these readings (the top 5, in this case) are ignored, and you are billed at the value of the 95th reading.

In this case, even though you sometimes sustained traffic at speeds as high as 22 Mbps, you would be billed using the 14 Mbps entry.

TOP 10 ENTRY	READING	COMMENT
100	22 Mbps	Ignored (top 5%)
99	19 Mbps	Ignored (top 5%)
98	17 Mbps	Ignored (top 5%)
97	16 Mbps	Ignored (top 5%)
96	15	Ignored (top 5%)
95	14	Your “95th Percentile” billing rate entry
94	13	
93	13	
92	12	
91	10	

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