

# Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

## Network Transparency Statement

Sandhill Telephone Cooperative (“Sandhill”) provides this Network Transparency Statement in accordance with the FCC’s Restore Internet Freedom Rules to ensure that you have sufficient information to make informed choices about the purchase of broadband services. Information about Sandhill’s other policies and practices concerning broadband are available at <http://www.shtc.net/>.

Sandhill engages in network management practices that are tailored and appropriate for achieving optimization on the network considering the particular network architecture and technology of its broadband Internet access service. Sandhill’s goal is to ensure that all of its customers experience a safe and secure broadband Internet environment that is fast, reliable and affordable. Sandhill wants its customers to indulge in all that the Internet has to offer, whether it is social networking, streaming videos and music, to communicating through email and videoconferencing.

Sandhill’s network management includes congestion- and security-protocol-management and customers generally will not be impacted by the protocols and practices that Sandhill uses to manage its network.

### **A. Sandhill’s Network Transparency Disclosures**

Sandhill uses various tools and industry standard techniques to manage its network and deliver fast, secure and reliable Internet service. Sandhill believes in full transparency and provides the following disclosures about its network management practices:

- 1. Blocking:** Sandhill does not block or discriminate against lawful content.
- 2. Throttling:** Sandhill does not throttle, impair or degrade lawful Internet traffic.
- 3. Affiliated Prioritization:** Sandhill does not prioritize Internet traffic and has no plans to do so.
- 4. Paid Prioritization:** Sandhill has never engaged in paid prioritization. We don’t prioritize Internet for consideration to benefit particular content, applications, services or devices. Sandhill does not have plans to enter into paid prioritization deals to create fast lanes.
- 5. Congestion Management:** Sandhill monitors the connections on its network in the aggregate on a weekly basis to determine the rate of utilization. If congestion emerges on the network, Sandhill will take the appropriate measures to relieve congestion.

On Sandhill’s network, all customers have access to all lawful services, applications and content online and, in the event of congestion, most Internet activities will be unaffected. Some customers, however, may experience longer download or upload times, or slower surf speeds on the web if instances of congestion do occur on Sandhill’s network.

Customers using conduct that abuses or threatens the Sandhill network or which violates the company's Acceptable Use Policy, Internet Service Terms and Conditions, or the Internet Service Agreement will be asked to stop any such use immediately. A failure to respond or to cease any such conduct could result in service suspension or termination.

Sandhill's network and congestion management practices are 'application-agnostic', based on current network conditions, and are not implemented on the basis of customers' online activities, protocols or applications. Sandhill's network management practices do not relate to any particular customer's aggregate monthly data usage.

Sandhill monitors its network on a weekly basis to determine utilization on its network. Sandhill also checks for abnormal traffic flows, network security breaches, malware, loss, and damage to the network. If a breach is detected or high volume users are brought to light by complaint, Sandhill provides notification to the customer via email or phone. If a violation of Sandhill's policies has occurred and such violation is not remedied, Sandhill will seek to suspend or terminate that customer's service.

6. **Application-Specific Behavior:** Except as may be provided elsewhere herein, Sandhill does not currently engage in any application-specific behaviors on its network. Customers may use any lawful applications with Sandhill.
7. **Device Attachment Rules:** For best results, DSL modems, wireless modems, or other proprietary network gateways used on the Sandhill broadband network will be provided by Sandhill. Customers may attach devices of their choosing to their modems, including wired or wireless routers, laptops, desktop computers, video game systems, televisions, or other network-enabled electronics equipment. However, *customers* are responsible for ensuring that their equipment does not harm Sandhill's network or impair the service of other customers. Sandhill is not responsible for the functionality or compatibility of any equipment provided by its customers. Customers are responsible for securing their own equipment to prevent unauthorized access to Sandhill's broadband network by third parties and will be held responsible for the actions of such third parties who gain unauthorized access through unsecured customer equipment.
8. **Network Security:** Sandhill knows the importance of securing its network and customers from network threats and annoyances. Sandhill offers, but cannot guarantee, security of its network and patrons by protections from such threats as spam, viruses, firewall issues, and phishing schemes. Sandhill also deploys spam filters in order to divert spam from an online customer's Sandhill email inbox into a quarantine file while allowing the customer to control which emails are identified as spam. Customers may access the spam files through their Sandhill provided email address. Spam files are automatically deleted if not accessed within 31 days. As its normal practice, Sandhill does not block any protocols, content or traffic for purposes of network management, but Sandhill may block or limit such traffic as spam, viruses, malware, or denial of service attacks to protect network integrity and the security of our customers.

## **B. Network Performance**

### **1. Service Descriptions**

Sandhill deploys Internet access to its subscribers through hardwired broadband access via DSL or Fiber.

### **2. Network Performance**

Sandhill takes measurements of various components for network performance, analysis of the measurements to determine normal levels, and determination of appropriate threshold values to ensure required levels of performance for its network. Sandhill measures such components as mean upload/download speeds, latency, internal testing, and consumer speed tests to gauge network performance. Sandhill monitors the values of these components to determine the overall performance of the network.

Sandhill makes every effort to support advertised speeds and will dispatch repair technicians to customer sites to perform speed tests as needed to troubleshoot and resolve speed and application performance caused by Sandhill's network. Sandhill measures availability, latency, and aggregate utilization on the network and strives to meet internal service level targets. However, customer's service performance may also be affected by one or more of the following: (1) the particular websites being accessed; (2) capacity in the public internet beyond Sandhill's network; (3) customer's computer and equipment (including wireless router); and (4) inside wiring at customer's premise.

Sandhill is in the process of developing additional systems that will allow us to measure these indicators out to test points at each major aggregation site on the edge of our last mile network. Once these systems are developed, Sandhill will be able to measure system metrics on a network-wide basis and will disclose the results on our website.

### **3. Impact of Non-BIAS Data Services**

The FCC has defined Non-Broadband Internet Access Services (Non-BIAS) to include services offered by broadband providers that share capacity with Broadband Internet Access Services (BIAS) (previously known as "Specialized Services") also offered by the provider over the last-mile facilities. At this time, Sandhill is offering non-BIAS data services where available.

Real time services, such as Non-BIAS services, include Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and Internet Protocol (IP) video services, command optimal bandwidth. As Non-BIAS traffic is combined with general Internet traffic on Sandhill's network, broadband customers could experience service delays, although very unlikely, if there is an occurrence of congestion on Sandhill's network. In any such event, the Non-BIAS traffic is given priority over general Internet traffic.

Sandhill offers IP video service to end-users. This non-BIAS data service may affect the last-mile capacity available for the Sandhill's broadband Internet access services, or the performance of such services. Customer should note that significantly heavier use of non-BIAS services (particularly IP video services) may impact the available capacity for and/or the performance of its broadband Internet access services.

## **C. Commercial Terms**

Pricing and additional service information may be found [here](#).

In addition to this Network Transparency Statement, patrons may also find links to the following on the Sandhill Website:

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(“FAQs”\)](#)
- [Acceptable Use Policy](#)

For questions, complaints or requests for additional information, please contact Sandhill 843-658-3434 or [yourshtc@shtc.net](mailto:yourshtc@shtc.net).