

Navy Launches Wi-Fi Pilot Program at Select Virginia Installations



The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60) returns to Naval Station Norfolk following an eight-month deployment, Jan. 20. Naval Station Norfolk is one of the locations for a new free Wi-Fi pilot program. *U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Anderson W. Branch*

WASHINGTON □ Free Wi-Fi is expected to provide Sailors access to virtual entertainment as well as online training and higher education courses without having to pay out of their own pockets.

To determine if free Wi-Fi meets the needs and desires of Sailors residing in unaccompanied housing, the Navy is launching a pilot program at installations located in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Rollout will be completed by the end of February 2024.

“Conducting a pilot program will help us learn and ensure we deliver a service our Sailors will use and find value added. As we learn throughout the process, we will identify barriers and refine the Wi-Fi service before rolling it out to the wider Navy,” said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). “It is important we get it right to focus our precious resources to greatest effect.”

Sailors residing at 12 permanent party unaccompanied housing located onboard Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and Norfolk Naval Shipyard will be able to access high speed Wi-Fi in their rooms and in common areas at no cost. Sailors desiring higher speed internet service may elect to pay an additional surcharge for augmented services or opt out altogether.

“We are excited to launch the Wi-Fi pilot program, and we are hoping Sailors find it useful and valuable to both their entertainment and career development needs,” said Leslie Gould, director of CNIC’s Fleet and Family Readiness, which is spearheading the pilot. “In addition to having access to online games, shows, and movies, Sailors will be able to complete required training, such as their General Military Training (GMT), and even take online courses offered by universities or colleges.”

Content accessed via the free Wi-Fi and subsidized speed upgrades will be filtered to prevent access to sites containing illegal activity, pornography, or gambling. Prices are as follows:

- 30Mbps download/5Mbps upload – Free (unlimited devices)
- 60 Mbps/5 Mbps – weekly on demand \$10; month-to-month \$20 (limited to 5 devices)
- 100 Mbps/10 Mbps – weekly on demand \$15; month-to-month \$30 (limited to 5 devices)

In addition to the above speed and rate charges, Sailors have the option to access unfiltered internet content for the following rates:

- 10 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload – weekly on demand \$19.95 (limited to 1 device)
- 30 Mbps/5 Mbps – weekly on demand \$34.95 (limited to 1 device); month-to-month \$49.95 (limited to 3 devices)
- 60 Mbps/5 Mbps – month-to-month \$59.95 (limited to 5 devices)
- 100 Mbps/10 Mbps – month-to-month \$79.95 (limited to 5 devices)

The pilot program will wrap up at the end of September at which time the Navy will assess the success of the pilot based

largely on Sailor utilization and feedback.

The Wi-Fi pilot is part of a new and larger program called the Virtual Single Sailor Program, which directly supports the Quality of Service of Sailors. The Virtual Single Sailor Program, or VSSP for short, enhances the lifestyle of the modern Sailor by providing a new virtual entertainment environment while supporting their overall health through access to fitness and nutrition content and other virtual resources. The VSSP website (www.NavyMWRSingleSailor.com) will go live on January 30.