

Wi-Fi, routers & broadband | Medium | 2 min read

What is a VPN and do you need one?

A VPN, or virtual private network, creates a protected tunnel for your internet traffic. You will see them advertised everywhere, so it is worth knowing what they do and do not do.

What a VPN does

When you use a VPN, your traffic travels through the VPN company's servers before reaching the website. This has two main effects:

- People on the same network, such as in a cafe or hotel, cannot easily read what you send.
- Websites see the VPN company's address instead of your own, which hides your rough location.

What it does not do

- It does not stop viruses or scams.
- It does not make you anonymous. The VPN company can still see some information.
- It does not make you safe if you type your password into a fake website.
- It usually will not make your internet faster. It can slow it down.

When a VPN is useful

- Using public Wi-Fi in cafes, airports or hotels.
- Connecting to your workplace securely, if your employer provides one.
- Wanting extra privacy from your internet provider.

When you probably do not need one

At home, on a secured network, with updated devices and strong passwords, a VPN adds little for everyday use. Most websites already protect your connection, which you can see from the padlock in the browser.

Choosing carefully

1. Avoid free VPNs, as they may collect and sell your data.
2. Choose a well-known paid service with a clear privacy policy and good reviews from independent sources.
3. Download apps only from official app stores or the company's own website.
4. Be wary of adverts or pop-ups that claim your device is at risk and push a VPN.

Problems a VPN can cause

Some banks, streaming services and websites block VPN traffic. If a site will not work, turn the VPN off and try again.

When to get more help

If you are unsure which VPN is trustworthy, or your work VPN will not connect, we can guide you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.