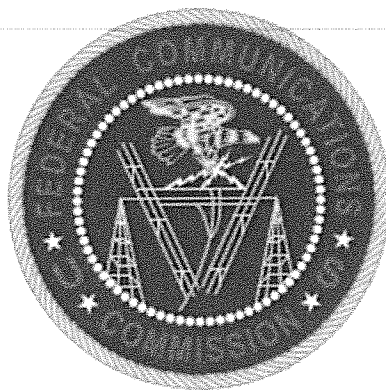


THE PUBLIC AND BROADCASTING:

How to Get the Most Service from Your Local Station

Revised July 2008



**Prepared by: The Media Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C.**

You can obtain a hard copy of "The Public and Broadcasting" from your local broadcast station, or by calling the FCC toll-free at 1-(888)-225-5322 (1-(888)-CALL FCC) (Voice) or 1-(888)-835-5322 (1-(888)-TELL FCC) (TTY). This document can also be found on the Commission's website at: http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/decdoc/public_and_broadcasting.html. That version will be updated periodically and will contain the most recent revisions.

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maintain the current version on the FCC website at www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/decdoc/public_and_broadcasting.html, we urge you to also make use of the resources contained in these links, which may outline any more recent developments in the law not discussed in the current version of the Manual. If you have any specific questions, you may also contact our Broadcast Information Specialist for radio or television, depending on the nature of your inquiry, by calling toll-free, by facsimile, or by sending an e-mail in the manner noted at pages 32-33 of this Manual.

THE FCC AND ITS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Communications Act. The FCC was created by Congress in the Communications Act for the purpose of "regulating interstate and foreign commerce in communication by wire and radio so as to make available, so far as possible, to all the people of the United States, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, a rapid, efficient, Nation-wide, and world-wide wire and radio communications service . . ." (In this context, the word "radio" covers both broadcast radio and television.) The Communications Act authorizes the FCC to "make such regulations not inconsistent with law as it may deem necessary to prevent interference between stations and to carry out the provisions of [the] Act." It directs us to base our broadcast licensing decisions on the determination of whether those actions will serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

How the FCC Adopts Rules. As is the case with most other federal agencies, the FCC generally cannot adopt or change rules without first describing or publishing the proposed rules and seeking comment on them from the public. We release a document called a Notice of Proposed Rule Making, in which we explain the new rules or rule changes that we are proposing and establish a filing deadline for public comment on them. (All such FCC Notices are included in the Commission's Daily Digest and are posted on our website at http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Digest). After we have had a chance to hear from the public and have considered all comments received, we generally have several options. We can: (1) adopt some or all of the proposed rules, (2) adopt a modified version of some or all of the proposed rules, (3) ask for public comment on additional issues relating to the proposals, or (4) end the rulemaking proceeding without adopting any rules at all. You can find information about how to file comments in our rulemaking proceedings on our Internet website at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/howtocomment.html. The site also provides instructions on how you can file comments electronically. In addition to adopting rules, we also establish broadcast regulatory policies through the individual cases that we decide, such as those involving license renewals, station sales, and complaints about violations of FCC rules.

The FCC and the Media Bureau. The FCC has five Commissioners, each of whom is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Serving under the Commissioners are a number of Offices and operating Bureaus. One of those is the Media Bureau, which has day-to-day responsibility for developing, recommending, and administering the rules governing the media, including radio and television stations. The FCC's broadcast rules are contained in Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations ("CFR"), Parts 73 (broadcast) and 74 (auxiliary broadcast,

to any other station. Once its application has been granted, the applicant is issued a construction permit, which authorizes it to build the station within a specified period of time, usually three years. After the applicant (now considered a "permittee") builds the station, it must file a license application, in which it certifies that it has constructed the station consistent with the technical and other terms specified in its construction permit. Upon grant of that license application, the FCC issues the new license to operate to the permittee (now considered a "licensee"), which authorizes the new licensee to operate for a stated period of time, up to eight years. At the close of this period, the licensee must seek renewal of its station license.

Applications for License Renewal. Licenses expire and renewal applications are due on a staggered basis, based upon the state in which the station is licensed. Before we can renew a station's license, we must first determine whether, during the preceding license term, the licensee has served the public interest; has not committed any serious violations of the Communications Act or the FCC's rules; and has not committed other violations which, taken together, would constitute a pattern of abuse. To assist us in this evaluative process, a station licensee must file a renewal application (FCC Form 303-S), in which it must respond concerning whether:

- it has sent us certain required reports;
- neither it nor its owners have or have had any interest in a broadcast application involved in an FCC proceeding in which character issues were resolved adversely to the applicant or were left unresolved, or were raised in connection with a pending application;
- its ownership is consistent with the Communications Act's restrictions on licensee interests held by foreign governments, foreign corporations, and non-U.S. citizens;
- there has not been an adverse finding or adverse final action against it or its owners by a court or administrative body in a civil or criminal proceeding involving a felony, mass media-related antitrust or unfair competition law, the making of fraudulent statements to a governmental unit, or discrimination;
- there were no adjudicated violations of the Communications Act or the Commission's rules during the current license term;
- neither the licensee nor its owners have been denied federal benefits due to drug law violations;
- its station operation complies with the Commission's radiofrequency ("RF") radiation exposure standards;
- it has, in a timely manner, placed and maintained certain specified materials in its public inspection file (as discussed at pages 25-31 of this Manual);
- it has not discontinued station operations for more than 12 consecutive months during the preceding license term and is currently broadcasting programming;
- it has filed FCC Form 396, the Broadcast Equal Employment Opportunity Program Report; and
- if the application is for renewal of a television license, it has complied with the limitations on commercial matter aired during children's programming and filed the necessary Children's Television Programming Reports (FCC Form 398) (as discussed at page 17 of this Manual).

Digital Television. After February 17, 2009, all full-power TV stations are required to stop

quality of the radio signal and allows a station to offer multicasting over several programming streams, as well as certain enhanced services. Unlike the mandatory digital transition deadline for television stations however, radio stations will be able to continue to operate in analog and will have discretion whether also to transmit in digital and, if so, when to begin such operation. In order to receive the digital signals of those stations that choose to so operate, consumers will have to purchase new receivers.

Because digital radio technology allows a radio station to transmit simultaneously in both analog and digital, however, listeners will be able to continue to use their current radios to receive the analog signals of radio stations that transmit both analog and digital signals. Receivers are being marketed that incorporate both modes of reception, with the ability to automatically switch to the analog signal if the digital signal cannot be detected or is lost by the receiver. For additional information about digital radio, see <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/digital/index.html>.

Public Participation in the Licensing Process

Renewal Applications. You can submit a protest against a station's license renewal application by filing a formal petition to deny its application, or by sending us an informal objection to the application. Before its license expires, each station licensee must broadcast a series of announcements providing the date its license will expire, the filing date for the renewal application, the date by which formal petitions against it must be filed, and the location of the station's public inspection file that contains the application. Petitions to deny the application must be filed by the end of the first day of the last full calendar month of the expiring license term. (For example, if the license expires on December 31, we must receive any petition at our Washington, D.C. headquarters by the end of the day on December 1.)

Broadcast licenses generally expire on a staggered basis, by state, with most radio licenses next expiring between October 1, 2011 and August 1, 2014, and most television licenses expiring between October 1, 2012 and August 1, 2015, one year after the radio licenses in the same state. A listing of the next expiration dates for radio and television licenses, by state, can be found on the Commission's website at <http://www.fcc.gov/localism/renewals.html>. Before you file a petition to deny an application, you should check our rules and policies to make sure that your petition complies with our procedural requirements. A more complete description of these procedures and requirements can be found on the Commission's website at http://www.fcc.gov/localism/renew_process_handout.pdf. You can also file an informal objection at any time before we either grant or deny the application. Instructions for filing informal objections can be found on the Commission's website at http://www.fcc.gov/localism/renew_process_handout.pdf. If you have any specific questions, you may also contact our Broadcast Information Specialist for radio or television, depending on the nature of your inquiry, by calling toll-free, by facsimile, or by sending an e-mail in the manner noted at pages 32-33 of this Manual.

Other Types of Applications. You can also participate in the application process by filing a petition to deny when someone applies for a new station, and when a station is to be sold (technically called an "assignment" of the license), its licensee is to undergo a major transfer of

background, gender, or other characteristics. It also protects broadcasts that criticize or ridicule established customs and institutions, including the government and its officials. The Commission recognizes that, under our Constitution, people must be free to say things that the majority may abhor, not only what most people may find tolerable or congenial. However, if you are offended by a station's programming, we urge you to make your concerns known to the station licensee, in writing.

Programming Access. In light of their discretion to formulate their programming, station licensees are not required to broadcast everything that is offered or otherwise suggested to them. Except as required by the Communications Act, including the use of stations by candidates for public office (discussed at pages 13-14 of this Manual), licensees have no obligation to allow any particular person or group to participate in a broadcast or to present that person or group's remarks.

BROADCAST PROGRAMMING: LAW AND POLICY ON SPECIFIC KINDS OF PROGRAMMING

Broadcast Journalism

Introduction. As noted above, in light of the fundamental importance of the free flow of information to our democracy, the First Amendment and the Communications Act bar the FCC from telling station licensees how to select material for news programs, or prohibiting the broadcast of an opinion on any subject. We also do not review anyone's qualifications to gather, edit, announce, or comment on the news; these decisions are the station licensee's responsibility. Nevertheless, there are two issues related to broadcast journalism that are subject to Commission regulation: hoaxes and news distortion.

Hoaxes. The broadcast by a station of false information concerning a crime or catastrophe violates the FCC's rules if:

- the station licensee knew that the information was false,
- broadcasting the false information directly causes substantial public harm, and
- it was foreseeable that broadcasting the false information would cause such harm.

In this context, a "crime" is an act or omission that makes the offender subject to criminal punishment by law, and a "catastrophe" is a disaster or an imminent disaster involving violent or sudden events affecting the public. The broadcast must cause direct and actual damage to property or to the health or safety of the general public, or diversion of law enforcement or other public health and safety authorities from their duties, and the public harm must begin immediately.

If a station airs a disclaimer before the broadcast that clearly characterizes the program as fiction and the disclaimer is presented in a reasonable manner under the circumstances, the program is presumed not to pose foreseeable public harm. Additional information about the hoax rule can be

In addition, a station must sell political advertising time to certain candidates during specified periods before a primary or general election at the lowest rate charged for the station's most favored commercial advertiser. Stations must maintain and make available for public inspection, in their public inspection files, a political file containing certain documents and information, discussed at page 28 of this Manual. For additional information about the political rules, see <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/policy/political/>.

Objectionable Programming

Programming Inciting "Imminent Lawless Action." The Supreme Court has held that the government may curtail speech if it is both: (1) intended to incite or produce "imminent lawless action;" and (2) likely to "incite or produce such action." Even when this legal test is met, any review that might lead to a curtailment of speech is generally performed by the appropriate criminal law enforcement authorities, not by the FCC.

Obscene, Indecent, or Profane Programming. Although, for the reasons discussed earlier, the Commission is generally prohibited from regulating broadcast content, the courts have held that the FCC's regulation of obscene and indecent programming is constitutional, because of the compelling societal interests in protecting children from potentially harmful programming and supporting parents' ability to determine the programming to which their children will be exposed at home.

Obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment and cannot be broadcast at any time. To be obscene, the material must have all of the following three characteristics:

- an average person, applying contemporary community standards, must find that the material, as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
- the material must depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and
- the material, taken as a whole, must lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

Indecent material is protected by the First Amendment, so its broadcast cannot constitutionally be prohibited at all times. However, the courts have upheld Congress' prohibition of the broadcast of indecent material during times of the day in which there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience, which the Commission has determined to be between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Indecent programming is defined as "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory organs or activities." Broadcasts that fall within this definition and are aired between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. may be subject to enforcement action by the FCC.

Profane material also is protected by the First Amendment, so its broadcast cannot be outlawed entirely. The Commission has defined such program matter to include language that is both "so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance" and is sexual or excretory in nature or derived from such terms. Such material may be the subject of

the industry voluntarily commit to reducing the amount of such programming viewed by children. The Commission also suggested that Congress consider enacting legislation that would better support parents' efforts to safeguard their children from such objectionable programming. The Commission's Report can be accessed at http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-07-50A1.pdf.

The V-Chip and TV Program Ratings. In light of the widespread concern about obscene, indecent, profane, violent, or otherwise objectionable programming, in 1996, Congress passed a law to require TV sets with screens 13 inches or larger to be equipped with a "V-Chip" – a device that allows parents to program their sets to block TV programming that carries a certain rating. Since 2000, all such sets manufactured with screens 13 inches or larger must contain the V-Chip technology. This technology, which must be activated by parents, works in conjunction with a voluntary television rating system created and administered by the television industry and others, which enables parents to identify programming containing sexual, violent, or other content that they believe may be harmful to their children. All of the major broadcast networks and most of the major cable networks are encoding their programming with this ratings information to work with the V-Chip. However, some programming, such as news and sporting events, and unedited movies aired on premium cable channels, are not rated. In 2004, the FCC expanded the V-Chip requirement to apply also to devices that do not have a display screen but are used with a TV set, such as a VCR or a digital-to-analog converter box.

For more information about this ratings program, including a description of each ratings category, please see the FCC's V-Chip website at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/vchip.html>.

Other Broadcast Content Regulation

Station Identification. Stations must air identification announcements when they sign on and off for the day. They also must broadcast these announcements every hour, as close to the start of the hour as possible, at a natural programming break. TV stations may make these announcements on-screen or by voice only. Official station identification includes the station's call letters, followed by the community specified in its license as the station's location. Between the call letters and its community, the station may insert the name of the licensee, the station's channel number, and/or its frequency. It may also include any additional community or communities, as long as it first names the community to which it is licensed by the FCC. DTV stations also may identify their digital multicast programming streams separately if they wish, and, if so, must follow the format described in the FCC's rules.

Commencing as of a date to be determined, for television stations, twice daily, the station identification will also have to include a notice of the existence, location and accessibility of the station's public file. The notice will have to state that the station's public file is available for inspection and that members of the public can view it at the station's main studio and on its station website. Broadcast of at least one of these announcements will be required between the hours of 6 p.m. and midnight.

Children's Television Programming. Throughout its license term, every TV station must serve

country. This website also can help TV stations comply with the children's television requirements. You can access the children's educational television website by going to the FCC's main website at <http://www.fcc.gov> and double-clicking on the "Parents' Place" listing under "Consumer Center" on the FCC home page. Alternatively, you can go directly to the children's television website at <http://www.fcc.gov/parents/childrenstv.html>.

Station-Conducted Contests. A station that broadcasts or advertises information about a contest that it conducts must fully and accurately disclose the material terms of the contest, and must conduct the contest substantially as announced or advertised. Contest descriptions may not be false, misleading, or deceptive with respect to any material term, including the factors that define the operation of the contest and affect participation, such as entry deadlines, the prizes that can be won, and how winners will be selected. Additional information about the contest rule can be found at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/contests.html>.

Lotteries. Federal law prohibits the broadcast of advertisements for a lottery or information concerning a lottery. A lottery is any game, contest, or promotion that contains the elements of prize, chance, and "consideration" (a legal term that means an act or promise that is made to induce someone into an agreement). For example, casino gambling is generally considered to be a "lottery" subject to the terms of the advertising restriction although, as discussed below, the prohibition is not applied to truthful advertisements for lawful casino gambling. Many types of contests, depending on their particulars, also are covered under this definition.

The statute and FCC rules list a number of exceptions to this prohibition, principally advertisements for: (1) lotteries conducted by a state acting under the authority of state law, when the advertisement or information is broadcast by a radio or TV station licensed to a location in that state or in any other state that conducts such a lottery; (2) gambling conducted by an Indian Tribe under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act; (3) lotteries authorized or not otherwise prohibited by the state in which they are conducted, and which are conducted by a not-for-profit organization or a governmental organization; and (4) lotteries conducted as a promotional activity by commercial organizations that are clearly occasional and ancillary to the primary business of that organization, as long as the lotteries are authorized or not otherwise prohibited by the state in which they are conducted.

In 1999, the Supreme Court held that the prohibition on broadcasting advertisements for lawful casino gambling could not constitutionally be applied to truthful advertisements broadcast by radio or television stations licensed in states in which such gambling is legal. Relying upon the reasoning in that decision, the FCC and the United States Department of Justice later concluded that the lottery advertising prohibition may not constitutionally be applied to the broadcast of any truthful advertisements for lawful casino gambling, whether or not the state in which the broadcasting station is located permits casino gambling. Additional information about the rule concerning lotteries can be found at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/contests.html>.

Soliciting Funds. No federal law prohibits the broadcast by stations of requests for funds for legal purposes (including appeals by stations for contributions to meet their operating expenses), if the money or other contributions are used for the announced purposes. However, federal law

how to secure personal property, road closures, and how to obtain relief assistance. Similarly, if the emergency information is presented visually, it must be made accessible. If the emergency information interrupts programming, such as through a crawl, such information must be accompanied with an aural tone to alert persons with visual disabilities that the station is providing this information so that such persons may be alerted to turn to another source, such as a radio, for more information. Additional information concerning this requirement can be found on the FCC website at <http://ftp.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/emergencyvideo.html>.

BUSINESS PRACTICES AND ADVERTISING

Business Practices, Advertising Rates, and Profits. Except for the requirements concerning political advertisements (discussed at pages 13-14 of this Manual), the limits on the number of commercials that can be aired during children's programming (see page 17), and the prohibition of advertisements over noncommercial educational stations (see pages 21-22), the Commission does not regulate a licensee's business practices, such as its advertising rates or its profits. Rates charged for broadcast time are matters for private negotiation between sponsors and stations. Further, except for certain classes of political advertisements (see pages 13-14), station licensees have full discretion to accept or reject any advertising.

Employment Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO"). The FCC requires that all licensees of radio and TV stations afford equal opportunity in employment. We also prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex. However, religious stations are permitted to require that some or all of their employees meet a religious qualification.

Our EEO recruitment rules have three prongs. They require all stations that employ five or more full-time employees (defined as those regularly working 30 hours a week or more) to:

- widely distribute information concerning each full-time job vacancy, except for vacancies that need to be filled under demanding or other special circumstances;
- send notices of openings to organizations in the community that are involved in employment if the organization requests such notices; and
- engage in general outreach activities every two years, such as job fairs, internships, and other community events.

Each licensee with five or more full-time employees must maintain records of its recruitment efforts, and create and place in its public file an annual public file report listing specified information about its recruitment efforts. (The requirements for the EEO portion of the public file are discussed at page 28 of this Manual.) The annual EEO public file report must also be posted on a station's website, if one exists. In addition, television licensees with five or more full-time employees and radio licensees with 11 or more full-time employees must file an FCC Form 397 Broadcast Mid-Term Report. Each licensee, regardless of size, must file an FCC Form 396 EEO

modulation levels to emphasize commercial messages.

Manually controlling the set's volume level or using the "mute" button with a remote control constitutes the simplest approach to reducing volume levels deemed to be excessive. Many television receivers are equipped with circuits that are designed to stabilize the loudness between programs and commercials. These functions usually must be activated through the receiver's "set up/audio" menu. Should these techniques fail to resolve the problem, you may consider addressing any complaint about broadcast volume levels to the licensee of the station involved. Additional information about loud commercials can be found at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/backgroundnoise.html>.

False or Misleading Advertising. The Federal Trade Commission has primary responsibility for determining whether an advertisement is false or deceptive and for taking action against the sponsor. The Food and Drug Administration has primary responsibility for the safety of food and drug products. Depending on the nature of the advertisement, you should contact these agencies regarding advertisements that you believe may be false or misleading. Additional information about false or misleading advertising can be found at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/advertising.html>.

Offensive Advertising. Unless a broadcast advertisement is found to be in violation of a specific law or rule, the government cannot take action against it. However, if you believe that an advertisement is offensive because of the nature of the item advertised, the scheduling of the announcement, or the manner in which the message is presented, you should consider addressing your complaint directly to the station or network involved, providing the date and time of the broadcast and the product or advertiser in question. This will help those involved in the selection of advertising material to become better informed about audience opinion.

Tobacco and Alcohol Advertising. Federal law prohibits the airing of advertising for cigarettes, little cigars, smokeless tobacco, and chewing tobacco on radio, TV, or any other medium of electronic communication under the FCC's jurisdiction. However, the advertising of smoking accessories, cigars, pipes, pipe tobacco, or cigarette-making machines is not prohibited. Congress has not enacted any law prohibiting broadcast advertising of any kind of alcoholic beverage, and the FCC does not have a rule or policy regulating such advertisements.

Subliminal Programming. The Commission sometimes receives complaints regarding the alleged use of subliminal perception techniques in broadcast programming. Subliminal programming is designed to be perceived on a subconscious level only. Regardless of whether it is effective, the broadcast of subliminal material is inconsistent with a station's obligation to serve the public interest because it is designed to be deceptive.

BLANKETING INTERFERENCE

Rules. Some members of the public situated close to a radio station's transmitting antenna may experience impaired reception of other stations. This is called "blanketing" interference. The

blanketing or any other type of interference to broadcast reception, we encourage you to first communicate directly, in writing, with the licensee of the station that you believe is causing the interference. If the licensee does not satisfactorily resolve the problem, you can mail, fax, or e-mail a complaint to us as follows:

- For radio stations: Federal Communications Commission
Audio Division, Media Bureau
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Fax number: (202) 418-1411
E-mail address: radioinfo@fcc.gov

- For TV stations: Federal Communications Commission
Video Division, Media Bureau
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Fax number: (202) 418-2827
E-mail address: tvinfo@fcc.gov

Your complaint should include: (1) your name, address, and phone number; (2) the call letters of each station involved; (3) each location at which the interference occurs; and (4) each specific device receiving the interference. The more specific your complaint is, the easier it is for us and any station involved to identify and resolve the interference problem.

OTHER INTERFERENCE ISSUES

In many cases in which you receive interference on your television set or radio, the source of the problem could be with your equipment, which may not be adequately designed with circuitry or filtering to reject the unwanted signals of nearby transmitters. We recommend that you contact the equipment manufacturer or the store at which the equipment was purchased to attempt to resolve the interference problem. You can find more information about broadcast interference on the Commission's website, at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/interference.html>.

THE LOCAL PUBLIC INSPECTION FILE

Requirement to Maintain a Public Inspection File. Our rules require that all licensees and permittees of TV and radio stations and applicants for new broadcast stations maintain a file available for public inspection. This file must contain documents relevant to the station's operation and dealings with the community and the FCC. The public inspection file generally must be maintained at the station's main studio. To obtain the location and phone number of a

station must pay the postage for copies requested by telephone. Stations must fulfill requests for copies within a reasonable period of time, which generally should not exceed seven calendar days after the request is made. For additional information on these public file requirements, see <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/broadcast/pif.html>.

Contents of the File. The following materials must be maintained in each station public inspection file:

The License. Stations must keep a copy of their current FCC construction permit or license in the public file, together with any material documenting Commission-approved modifications to the authorization. The license or permit reflects the station's authorized technical parameters (such as its frequency, call letters, operating power and transmitter location), as well as any special conditions imposed by the FCC on the station's operation. It also indicates when it was issued and when it will expire.

Applications and Related Materials. The public file must contain copies of all applications involving the station filed with the Commission that are still pending before either the FCC or the courts. These include applications to sell the station or to modify its facilities (for example, to increase power, change the antenna system, or change the transmitter location). If a petition to deny any application was filed, the file must contain a statement to that effect, and the name and address of the petitioning party. Applications must be maintained until "final" FCC action on them, when the action can no longer be appealed or reversed.

The station must also keep copies of any granted construction permit or assignment or transfer application if its grant required us to waive our rules. Applications that required a waiver, together with any related material, will reflect each particular rule that we waived, and must be maintained as long as any such waiver remains in effect.

Also, if the FCC renewed the station license for less than a full term, the station must keep that renewal application (FCC Form 303-S) in the file until grant of its next renewal application by final FCC action. We may grant such a short-term renewal when we are concerned about the station's performance over the previous term. These concerns will be reflected in the renewal-related materials in the public file.

Citizen Agreements. Commercial stations must keep copies of any written agreements that they make with local viewers or listeners. These "citizen agreements" may deal with programming, employment, or other issues of community concern. The station must keep these agreements in the public file for as long as they are in effect.

Contour Maps. The public file must contain copies of any station service contour maps or other information submitted with any application filed with the FCC that reflects the station's service contours and/or its main studio and transmitter locations. The Commission's application forms require submission of contour maps only from stations that do not certify that their signals cover their city of license. These documents must stay

classes of time purchased. The file also must reflect any free time provided to a candidate. The station must keep the political records in the file for two years after the spot airs. (You can find more information regarding the political broadcasting laws at pages 13-14 of this Manual.)

EEO Materials. As noted earlier, licensees must submit certain forms containing EEO information and include copies in their station public files. Thus, all stations employing five or more full-time employees must put an EEO public file report in their station public file each year. We also require each radio and TV station licensee to file a Form 396 EEO Program Report with its license renewal application and to include the Report in its public file. Those licensees that file a Form 397 Broadcast Mid-Term Report must also include a copy in the public file. These materials must be retained in the file until final action on the station's next license renewal application. A new station applicant or prospective station buyer, if it intends to employ five or more full-time employees, must file a Form 396-A Broadcast EEO Model Program Report with its new station assignment or transfer application and the Report must be included in the public file as a part of the underlying application and retained in the file until the grant of the underlying application becomes final. (You can find more information regarding the EEO rules at pages 20-21 of this Manual.)

"The Public and Broadcasting." Stations must keep a copy of the current version of this Manual in the public file and provide a copy, upon request, to any member of the public. As noted above, you can also request a copy from the FCC or access it on our Internet website at http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/decdoc/public_and_broadcasting.html.

Letters and E-Mails from the Public. Commercial stations must keep in their files, for at least three years, written comments, suggestions, and e-mails received from the public regarding their operation. (Noncommercial educational stations are not subject to this requirement.) This obligation is limited to comments, suggestions, and e-mails sent to station management or a publicized station address. Letters need not be placed in the public inspection file when the author has requested that the letter not be made public or when the licensee feels that it should be excluded from public inspection because of the nature of its content (such as defamatory or obscene letters). Moreover, although television stations that post their public file materials on their websites must include e-mails received from the public, they need not post letters from the public, as long as they include hard copies of such letters in their public files, and a notice on their website that the letters can be located in the file. As noted above, all or a part of a station public file may be maintained on a computer database, as long as a computer terminal is made available, at the location of the file, for members of the public who wish to review the file. Accordingly, as an alternative to maintaining hard copies of e-mails in the public file, a station may place the e-mails on a computer database, as long as a terminal is made available at the location of the public file to members of the public who wish to review the file.

Quarterly Programming Reports. Every three months, each broadcast radio and television station licensee must prepare and place in its station public file a list of programs

Local Public Notice Announcements. As discussed at pages 10-11 of this Manual, when someone files an application to build a new station or to renew, sell, or modify an existing station, we generally require the applicant to make a series of local announcements to inform the public of the application's existence and nature. These announcements are either published in a local newspaper or made over the air on the station, and are intended to give the public an opportunity to comment on the application. A statement certifying compliance with this requirement, including the dates and times that notice was given, must be placed in the public file. The only exception to this public notice requirement is when the proposed station sale is "pro forma" and will not result in a change of ultimate control, or the modification application does not contemplate a "major change" of the station facilities.

Must-Carry or Retransmission Consent Election. The public file for all commercial television stations must also contain documentation of the station's election for carriage over cable and satellite systems. In this regard, there are two ways that a broadcast TV station can choose to be carried over a cable or satellite system: "must-carry" or "retransmission consent." Each is discussed below.

Must-Carry. TV stations are generally entitled to be carried on cable television systems in their local markets. A station that chooses to exercise this right receives no compensation from the cable system. Satellite carriers may decide to offer local stations in a designated market area. If they choose to offer one station, then they must carry all the stations in that market that request carriage.

Retransmission Consent. Instead of exercising their "must-carry" rights, commercial TV stations may choose to receive compensation from a cable system or satellite carrier in return for granting permission to the cable system or satellite carrier to carry the station. This option is available only to commercial TV stations. Because it is possible that a station that elects this option may not reach an agreement with the cable system, it may ultimately not be carried by the system.

Every three years, commercial TV stations must decide whether their relationship with each local cable system and satellite carrier that offers local service will be governed by must-carry or by retransmission consent agreements. Each commercial station must keep a copy of its decision in the public file for the three-year period to which it pertains.

Noncommercial stations are not entitled to compensation in return for carriage on a cable or satellite system, but they may request mandatory carriage on the system. A noncommercial station making such a request must keep a copy of the request in the public file for the duration of the period to which it applies.

DTV Transition Consumer Education Activity Reports. Each broadcast television station must place in its station public file on a quarterly basis an FCC Form 388 DTV Consumer Education Quarterly Activity Report outlining its efforts during the previous quarter to educate consumers on the transition to digital television. These reports must be

indicate: (1) the call letters of the station; (2) the city and state in which the station is located; (3) the name, time, and date of the specific program or advertisement in question, if applicable; (4) the name of anyone contacted at the station, if applicable; and (5) a statement of the problem, as specific as possible, together with an audio or video tape, CD, DVD or other recording or transcript of the program or advertisement that is the subject of your complaint (if possible). Please include your name and address if you would like information on the final disposition of your complaint; you may request confidentiality. We prefer that you submit complaints in writing, although you may submit complaints that are time-sensitive by telephone, especially if they involve safety concerns. Please be aware that we can only act on allegations that a station has violated a provision of the Communications Act or the FCC's rules or policies.

In addition to (or instead of) filing a complaint, you can file a petition to deny or an informal objection to an application that a station licensee has filed, such as a license renewal application. This procedure is discussed at pages 10-11 of this Manual. You may obtain further information on the petition to deny process on the Commission's website, at http://www.fcc.gov/localism/renew_process_handout.pdf. You may also wish to consider reviewing our rules or contacting an attorney. You can find links to our rules on the Commission website, at http://wireless.fcc.gov/index.htm?job=rules_and_regulations. As noted earlier, the rules governing broadcast stations are generally found in Part 73 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

BROADCAST INFORMATION SPECIALISTS

We have created contact points at the Commission, accessible via toll-free telephone numbers, by fax, or over the Internet, dedicated to providing information to members of the public regarding how they can become involved in the Commission's processes. Should you have questions about how to do so, including inquiries about our complaint or petitioning procedures or the filing and status of the license renewal, modification or assignment or transfer application for a particular station, you may contact one of our Broadcast Information Specialists, by calling, by facsimile, or by sending an e-mail, as noted below:

- If your question relates to a radio station:
Toll-Free: (866) 267-7202 (Voice) or (877) 479-1433 (TTY)
Fax: (202) 418-1411
E-Mail: radioinfo@fcc.gov
- If your question relates to a television station:
Toll-Free: (866) 918-5777 (Voice) or (866) 787-6222 (TTY)
Fax: (202) 418-2827
E-Mail: tvinfo@fcc.gov

If your question relates to both a radio and a television station or is general in nature, you may contact either specialist.