THE PUBLIC AND BROADCASTING:
How to Get the Most Service from Your Local Station

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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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INTRODUCTION

This Manual is published by the Federal Communications Commission (the "FCC" or the "Commission"), the federal agency directed by Congress to regulate broadcasting. It provides a brief overview of the FCC's regulation of broadcast radio and television licensees, describing how the FCC authorizes broadcast stations, the various rules relating to broadcast programming and operations with which stations must comply, and the essential obligation of licensees that their stations serve their local communities. The Manual also outlines how you can become involved in assessing whether your local stations are complying with the FCC's rules and meeting these service obligations, and what you can do if you believe that they are not.

In exchange for obtaining a valuable license to operate a broadcast station using the public airwaves, each radio and television licensee is required by law to operate its station in the "public interest, convenience and necessity." This means that it must air programming that is responsive to the needs and problems of its local community of license.

To do so, each station licensee must affirmatively identify those needs and problems and then specifically treat those local matters that it deems to be significant in the news, public affairs, political and other programming that it airs. As discussed at page 29 of this Manual, each station must provide the public with information about how it has met this obligation by means of quarterly reports, which contain a listing of the programming that it has aired that the licensee believes provided significant treatment of issues facing the community. As discussed in detail at pages 24-30 of this Manual, each station also must maintain and make available to any member of the public for inspection, generally at its studio, a local public inspection file which contains these reports, as well as other materials that pertain to the station's operations and dealings with the FCC and with the community that it is licensed to serve. The public file is an excellent resource to gauge a station's performance of its obligations as a Commission licensee. In the future, television stations with websites will be required to post most of the content of their public files on their websites, or on the website of their state local broadcasters association, if permitted.

The purpose of this Manual is to provide you with the basic tools necessary to ensure that the stations that are licensed to serve you meet their obligations and provide high quality broadcast service. Station licensees, as the trustees of the public's airwaves, must use the broadcast medium to serve the public interest. We at the FCC want you to become involved, if you have any concerns about a local station – including its general operation, programming or other matters – by making your opinion known to the licensee and, if necessary, by advising us of those concerns so that we can take appropriate action. An informed and actively engaged public plays a vital role in helping each station to operate appropriately and serve the needs of its local community.

This Manual provides only a general overview of our broadcast regulation. It is not intended to be a comprehensive or controlling statement of the broadcast rules and policies. Our Internet home page (www.fcc.gov) contains additional information about the Commission, our rules, current FCC proceedings, and other issues. At the close of each section of this Manual, we provide links to those places on the FCC website that provide additional information about the subject matter discussed in the section. Although we will periodically update this Manual and

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 page 32 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,

including low power TV, and translator stations). Our rules of practice and procedure can be found in Title 47 CFR, Part 1. A link to those rules can be found on our website at http://wireless.fcc.gov/index.htm?job=rules_and_regulations. Additional information about the Commission's Offices and Bureaus, including their respective functions, can be found at http://www.fcc.gov/aboutus.html.

FCC Regulation of Broadcast Radio and Television. The FCC allocates (that is, designates a portion of the broadcast spectrum to) new broadcast stations based upon both the relative needs of various communities for additional broadcast outlets and specified engineering standards designed to prevent interference among stations and to other communications users. As noted above, whenever we review an application – whether to build a new station, modify or renew a license or sell a station – we must determine if its grant would serve the public interest. As discussed earlier, we expect station licensees to be aware of the important problems and issues facing their local communities and to foster public understanding by presenting programming that relates to those local issues. As discussed in this Manual, however, broadcasters – not the FCC or any other government agency – are responsible for selecting the material that they air. By operation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and because the Communications Act expressly prohibits the Commission from censoring broadcast matter, our role in overseeing program content is very limited.

We license only individual broadcast stations. We do not license TV or radio networks (such as CBS, NBC, ABC or Fox) or other organizations with which stations have relationships (such as PBS or NPR), except to the extent that those entities may also be station licensees. We also do not regulate information provided over the Internet, nor do we intervene in private disputes involving broadcast stations or their licensees. Instead, we usually defer to the parties, courts, or other agencies to resolve such disputes.

THE LICENSING OF TV AND RADIO STATIONS

Commercial and Noncommercial Educational Stations. The FCC licenses FM radio and TV stations as either commercial or noncommercial educational ("NCE"). (All AM radio stations are licensed as commercial facilities.) Commercial stations generally support themselves through the sale of advertising. In contrast, NCE stations generally meet their operating expenses with contributions received from listeners and viewers, and also may receive government funding. In addition, NCE stations may receive contributions from for-profit entities, and are permitted to acknowledge such contributions or underwriting donations with announcements naming and generally describing the contributing party or donor. However, NCE stations may not broadcast commercials or other promotional announcements on behalf of for-profit entities. These limitations on NCE stations are discussed further at page 21 of this Manual.

Applications to Build New Stations; Length of the License Period. Before a party can build a new TV or radio station, it first must apply to the FCC for a construction permit. The applicant must demonstrate in its application that it is qualified to construct and operate the station as specified in its application and that its proposed facility will not cause objectionable interference

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 24-30 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

broadcasting in analog and continue broadcasting only in digital. This is known as the "DTV transition." Because digital is much more efficient than analog, part of the scarce and valuable spectrum that is currently used for analog broadcasting will be used for important new services such as enhanced public safety communications for police, fire departments, and emergency rescue workers. Part of the spectrum will also be made available for advanced wireless services such as wireless broadband.

Digital broadcasting also enables television stations to offer viewers several benefits. For example, stations broadcasting in digital can offer viewers improved picture and sound quality as well as more programming options (referred to as "multicasting") because digital technology gives each television station the ability to broadcast multiple channels at the same time.

Consumers who receive television signals via over-the-air antennas (as opposed to subscribers to pay services like cable and satellite TV) will be able to receive digital signals on their analog sets if they purchase a digital-to-analog converter box that converts the digital signals to analog. Alternatively, if consumers purchase a digital television (a TV with built in digital tuner), they will be able to receive digital broadcast programming. For TVs connected to a paid service, like cable or satellite, the digital transition should have no effect. If consumers have questions about their paid service, they can consult with their service provider.

Regarding consumers who are shopping for new televisions, the Commission's digital tuner rule prohibits the importation or interstate shipment of any device containing an analog tuner unless it also contains a digital tuner. Retailers may continue to sell analog-only devices from existing inventory. However, at the point of sale, retailers must post notices advising consumers that TV sets and equipment such as VCRs that contain only an analog tuner will not be able to receive over-the-air-television signals from full-power broadcast stations after February 17, 2009, without the use of a digital-to-analog converter box.

While the February 17, 2009, deadline for ending analog broadcasts does not apply to low-power, Class A, and TV translator stations, these stations will eventually transition to all-digital service. In the meantime, some consumers may continue to receive programming from these stations in analog format after the transition date.

Additional information concerning the DTV transition can be found on the FCC's website, at http://www.dtv.gov, or by calling toll free 1-888-CALL-FCC (Voice) or 1-888-TELL-FCC (TTY)

Digital Radio. The FCC has also approved digital operation for AM and FM radio broadcast stations (often referred to as "HD Radio"). As with DTV, digital radio substantially improves the 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 page 32 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 stock or other ownership, or control (technically called a "transfer of control"), or the station proposes major facility changes. The applicant is required to publish a series of notices in the closest local newspaper, containing information similar to that noted above regarding renewal applications, when it files these types of applications. Upon receipt of the application, the FCC will issue a Public Notice and begin a 30-day period during which petitions to deny these

applications may be filed. (All FCC Public Notices are included in the Commission's Daily Digest and are posted on our website at http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Digest). As with renewal applications, you can also file an informal objection to these types of applications, or any other applications, at any time before we either grant or deny the application. Again, if you have any specific questions about our processes or the status of a particular application involving a station, you may 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 page 32 of this Manual.

BROADCAST PROGRAMMING: BASIC LAW AND POLICY

The FCC and Freedom of Speech. The First Amendment, as well as Section 326 of the Communications Act, prohibits the Commission from censoring broadcast material and from interfering with freedom of expression in broadcasting. The Constitution's protection of free speech includes that of programming that may be objectionable to many viewer or listeners. Thus, the FCC cannot prevent the broadcast of any particular point of view. In this regard, the Commission has observed that "the public interest is best served by permitting free expression of views." However, the right to broadcast material is not absolute. There are some restrictions on the material that a licensee can broadcast. We discuss these restrictions below.

Licensee Discretion. Because the Commission cannot dictate to licensees what programming they may air, each individual radio and TV station licensee generally has discretion to select what its station broadcasts and to otherwise determine how it can best serve its community of license. Licensees are responsible for selecting their entertainment programming, as well as programs concerning local issues, news, public affairs, religion, sports events, and other subjects. As discussed at page 29 of this Manual, broadcast licensees must periodically make available detailed information about the programming that they air to meet the needs and problems of their communities, which can be found in each station public file. They also decide how their programs will be structured and whether to edit or reschedule material for broadcasting. In light of the First Amendment and Section 326 of the Communications Act, we do not substitute our judgment for that of the licensee, nor do we advise stations on artistic standards, format, grammar, or the quality of their programming. Licensees also have broad discretion regarding commercials, with the exception of those for political candidates during an election and the limitations on advertisements aired during children's programming (we discuss these respective requirements at pages 13-14, and 17 of this Manual).

Criticism, Ridicule, and Humor Concerning Individuals, Groups, and Institutions. The First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech similarly protects programming that stereotypes or may otherwise offend people with regard to their religion, race, national 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 found on the FCC's website at http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/falsebroadcast.html.

News Distortion. The Commission often receives complaints concerning broadcast journalism, such as allegations that stations have aired inaccurate or one-sided news reports or comments, covered stories inadequately, or overly dramatized the events that they cover. For the reasons

noted above, the Commission generally will not intervene in such cases because it would be inconsistent with the First Amendment to replace the journalistic judgment of licensees with our own. However, as public trustees, broadcast licensees may not intentionally distort the news: the FCC has stated that "rigging or slanting the news is a most heinous act against the public interest." The Commission will investigate a station for news distortion if it receives documented evidence of such rigging or slanting, such as testimony or other documentation, from individuals with direct personal knowledge that a licensee or its management engaged in the intentional falsification of the news. Of particular concern would be evidence of the direction to employees from station management to falsify the news. However, absent such a compelling showing, the Commission will not intervene. For additional information about news distortion, see http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/journalism.html.

Political Broadcasting: Candidates for Public Office. In recognition of the particular importance of the free flow of information to the public during the electoral process, the Communications Act and the Commission's rules impose specific obligations on broadcasters regarding political speech.

- **Reasonable Access.** The Communications Act requires that broadcast stations provide "reasonable access" to candidates for federal elective office. Such access must be made available during all of a station's normal broadcast schedule, including television prime time and radio drive time. In addition, federal candidates are entitled to purchase all classes of time offered by stations to commercial advertisers, such as preemptible and non-preemptible time. The only exception to the access requirement is for *bona fide* news programming (as defined below), during which broadcasters may choose not to sell airtime to federal candidates. Broadcast stations have discretion as to whether to sell time to candidates in state and local elections.

- **Equal Opportunities**. The Communications Act requires that, when a station provides airtime to a legally qualified candidate for any public office (federal, state, or local), the station must "afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office." The equal opportunities provision of the Communications Act also provides that the station "shall have no power of censorship over the material broadcast" by the candidate. The law exempts from the equal opportunities requirement appearances by candidates during *bona fide* news programming, defined as an appearance by a legally qualified candidate on a *bona fide* newscast, interview, or documentary (if the appearance of the candidate is incidental to the presentation of the subject covered by the documentary) or on–the–spot coverage of a *bona fide* news event (including debates, political conventions and related incidental activities).

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 pages 27-28 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 possible Commission enforcement action if it is broadcast within the same time period applicable to indecent programming: between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

How to File an Obscenity, Indecency, or Profanity Complaint: In order to allow its staff to make a determination of whether complained-of material is actionable, the Commission requires

that complainants provide certain information: (1) the date and time of the alleged broadcast; (2) the call sign, channel or frequency of the station involved; and (3) the details of what was actually said (or depicted) during the alleged indecent, profane, or obscene broadcast. Submission of an audio or video tape, CD, DVD or other recording or transcript of the complained-of material is not required but is helpful, as is specification of the name of the program, the on-air personality, song, or film, and the city and state in which the complainant saw or heard the broadcast.

The fastest and easiest way to file a complaint containing this information is to use the FCC's electronic complaint form, Form 475B, which is available on the FCC's website at http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/cgb/fcc475B.cfm.

You also may file a complaint about objectionable programming by mailing it to:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554.

If you are submitting an audio or video tape, DVD, CD or other type of media with your complaint, you should send it to the following address to avoid mail processing damage:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743.

You can also electronically file your complaint at fccinfo@fcc.gov

You may also complain by calling the Commission, toll-free, at:

1-(888)-CALL-FCC (1-(888)-225-5322) (Voice)
1-(888)-TELL-FCC (1-(888)-835-5322) (TTY)

For additional information on the complaint process for obscene, indecent or profane material, visit http://www.fcc.gov/eb/oip.

Violent Programming. Many members of the public have expressed concern about violent television programming and the negative impact such broadcast material may have upon children. In response to these concerns, and at the request of 39 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the FCC conducted a proceeding seeking public comment on violent programming. In April 2007, the Commission delivered to Congress a Report recommending that 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 the educational and informational needs of children both by means of its overall programming and through programming that is specifically designed to serve those needs. Licensees are eligible for routine staff-level approval of the Children's Television Act portion of their renewal applications if they air at least three hours of "core" children's television programming, per week, or

proportionally more if they provide additional free digital programming streams. Core programming is defined as follows:

- **Educational and Informational.** The programming must further the educational and informational needs of children 16 years old and under (this includes their intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs).

- **Specifically Designed to Serve These Needs.** A program is considered "specifically designed to serve the educational and information needs of children" if: (1) that is its significant purpose; (2) it is aired between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.; (3) it is a regularly scheduled weekly program; and (4) it is at least 30 minutes in duration.

To ensure that parents and other interested parties are informed of the educational and informational children's programming that their area stations offer, television licensees must identify each program specifically designed to "educate and inform" children by displaying the icon "E/I" throughout the program. In addition, commercial stations must provide information identifying such programs to the publishers of program guides.

During the broadcast of TV programs aimed at children 12 and under, advertising may not exceed 10.5 minutes an hour on weekends and 12 minutes an hour on weekdays.

These rules apply to analog and digital broadcasting. As discussed at page 9 of this Manual, television stations have traditionally operated with analog technology. Television stations, however, are in the process of switching to digital broadcasting, which greatly enhances their capability to serve their communities. Among other things, digital technology permits stations to engage in multicasting, that is, to air more than one stream of programming at the same time. Digital stations that choose to air more than one stream of free, over-the-air video programming must air proportionately more children's educational programming than stations that air only one stream of free, over-the-air video programming.

Each television licensee is required to prepare and place in the public inspection file at the station a quarterly Children's Television Programming Report (FCC Form 398) identifying its core programming. These reports must also be filed electronically with the FCC each quarter and can be viewed on the FCC's website, at http://www.fcc.gov/mb/engineering/kidvid. This requirement of the station's public file is discussed at page 29 of this Manual.

The FCC has created a children's educational television website to inform parents and other members of the public about the obligation of every television broadcast station to provide educational and informational programming for children. This website provides access to background information about these obligations, as well as information about children's educational programs that are aired on television stations in your area and throughout the 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 homepage. 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 prohibits fraud by wire, radio or television – including situations in which money solicited for one purpose is used for another – and doing so may lead to FCC sanctions, as well as to criminal prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice. Additional information about fund solicitation can be found at http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/contests.html.

Broadcast of Telephone Conversations. Before broadcasting a telephone conversation live or recording a telephone conversation for later broadcast, a station must inform any party to the call of its intention to broadcast the conversation. However, that notification is not necessary when the other party knows that the conversation will be broadcast or such knowledge can be reasonably presumed, such as when the party is associated with the station (for example, as an employee or part-time reporter) or originates the call during a program during which the station customarily broadcasts the calls. For additional information on the rule concerning the broadcast of telephone conversations, see http://www.fcc.gov/eb/broadcast/telphon.html.

ACCESS TO BROADCAST MATERIAL BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Communications Act and the Commission's rules require television station licensees to broadcast certain information that makes viewing more accessible to people with disabilities.

Closed Captioning. Closed captioning is a technology designed to provide access to television programming by persons with hearing disabilities by displaying, in text form, the audio portion of a broadcast, as well as descriptions of background noise and sound effects. Closed captioning is hidden as encoded data transmitted within the television signal. A viewer wishing to see the captions must use a set-top decoder or a television with built-in decoder circuitry. All television sets with screens 13 inches or larger manufactured since mid-1993, including digital sets, have built-in decoder circuitry.

As directed by Congress in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the FCC has adopted rules requiring closed captioning of most, but not all, television programming. The rules require those that distribute television programs directly to home viewers, including broadcast stations, to comply with these rules. The rules also provide certain exemptions from the captioning requirements. Additional information on the closed captioning requirements may be found on the FCC website at http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/caption.html.

Access to Emergency Information. The FCC also requires television stations to make the local emergency information that they provide to viewers accessible to persons with disabilities. Thus, if emergency information is provided aurally, such information also must be provided in a visual format for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. The emergency information may be closed captioned or presented through an alternative method of visual presentation. Such methods include open captioning, crawls, or scrolls that appear on the screen. The information provided visually must include critical details regarding the emergency and how to respond. Critical details could include, among other things, specific information regarding the areas that will be affected by the emergency, evacuation orders, detailed descriptions of areas to be evacuated, specific evacuation routes, approved shelters or the way to take shelter in one's home, instructions on 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 page 21), 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 Program Report with its license renewal application. Finally, a prospective station licensee must file an FCC Form 396-A Broadcast Model Program Report with its new station or assignment or transfer application. The FCC reviews EEO compliance at the time that it considers the station renewal application, when it reviews Broadcast Mid-Term Reports, when it receives EEO

complaints, and during random station audits. A full range of enforcement actions is available for EEO violations, including the imposition of reporting conditions, forfeitures, short-term license renewal, and license revocation.

All EEO forms are electronically filed and are available for public review in CDBS, the FCC's access database (to access these reports, see http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/cdbs/pubacc/prod/eeo_search.htm). As discussed at page 27 of this Manual, in addition, copies of all FCC EEO audit letters, licensee responses, and FCC rulings must be included in the audited station's public file and are available for public review at the FCC Public Reference Center in Washington, D.C. Additional information concerning the EEO rules is available at http://www.fcc.gov/mb/policy/eeo/.

Sponsorship Identification. The sponsorship identification requirements contained in the Communications Act and the Commission's rules generally require that, when money or other consideration for the airing of program material has been received by or promised to a station, its employees or others, the station must broadcast full disclosure of that fact at the time of the airing of the material, and identify who provided or promised to provide the consideration. This requirement is grounded in the principle that members of the public should know who is trying to persuade them with the programming being aired. This disclosure requirement also applies to the broadcast of musical selections for consideration (so-called "payola") and the airing of certain video news releases. In the case of advertisements for commercial products or services, it is sufficient for a station to announce the sponsor's corporate or trade name, or the name of the sponsor's product (where it is clear that the mention of the product constitutes a sponsorship identification). For additional information about the sponsorship identification and payola rules, see http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/PayolaRules.html.

Underwriting Announcements on Noncommercial Educational Stations. Noncommercial educational stations may acknowledge contributions over the air, but they may not broadcast commercials or otherwise promote the goods and services of for-profit donors or underwriters. Acceptable "enhanced underwriting" acknowledgements of for-profit donors or underwriters may include: (1) logograms and slogans that identify but do not promote; (2) location information; (3) value-neutral descriptions of a product line or service; and (4) brand names, trade names, and product service listings. However, such acknowledgements may not interrupt the station's regular programming. For additional information about the underwriting rules, see http://www.fcc.gov/eb/broadcast/enhund.html.

Loud Commercials. The FCC does not regulate the volume of broadcast programming, including commercials. Surveys and technical studies reveal that the perceived loudness of particular broadcast matter is a subjective judgment that varies with each viewer and listener and is influenced by many factors, such as the material's content and style and the voice and tone of the person speaking. The FCC has found no evidence that stations deliberately raise audio and 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 Commission's rules impose certain obligations on licensees to resolve such interference complaints. Complaints about such interference involving radio stations are handled by the Media Bureau's Audio Division. Blanketing interference is a less common occurrence with television stations than with radio stations due to the location and height of TV transmitting antennas. If

this phenomenon does occur with a television station, the Media Bureau's Video Division will handle complaints on a case-by case-basis, subject to the radio guidelines noted below.

At the outset, the policy is designed to provide protection from interference for individuals within a certain distance from a station (in an area known as the station's "blanketing contour") and only involving electronic devices that pick up an over-the-air signal from a broadcast radio or television station. Thus, stations are **not** required to resolve interference complaints involving the following:

- A complaint from a party located outside of the station's blanketing contour (115 dBu contour for FM stations, 1 V/m contour for AM stations).
- Improperly installed antenna systems.
- Use of high gain antennas or antenna booster amplifiers.
- Mobile receivers, including but not limited to car radios, portable stereos or cellular phones.
- Non-radio frequency ("RF") devices, including but not limited to, tape recorders, CD players, MP3 players or "land-line" telephones.
- Cordless telephones.

For complaints from parties located within the station's blanketing contour involving non-mobile television or radio receivers, a station must resolve the interference complaint at no cost to the complaining party if the party notifies the station of the problem during the first year that the station operates its new or modified facilities. For similar complaints received after the first year of such operation has passed, although the station is not financially responsible for resolving the complaint, it must provide effective technical assistance to the complaining party. These efforts must include the provision of information and assistance sufficiently specific to enable the complaining party to eliminate all blanketing interference and not simply an attempt by the station to correct the problems. Such assistance entails providing specific details about proper corrective measures to resolve the blanketing interference. For example, stations should provide the complaining party with diagrams and descriptions which explain how and where to use radiofrequency chokes, ferrite cores, filters, and/or shielded cable. In addition, effective technical assistance also includes recommending replacement equipment that would work better in high radiofrequency fields. Effective technical assistance does not mean referring the complainant to the equipment manufacturer.

How to Resolve Blanketing Interference Problems. If you believe that you are receiving 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's main studio, consult your local telephone directory, or call the station's business office. You may also be able to find this information on the station's Internet website, if one exists.

Purpose of the File. Because we do not routinely monitor each station's programming and

operations, viewers and listeners are an important source of information about the nature of their area stations' programming, operations, and compliance with their FCC obligations. The documents contained in each station's public inspection file have information about the station that can assist the public in this important monitoring role.

As discussed in this Manual, every station has an obligation to provide news, public affairs, and other programming that specifically treats the important issues facing its community, and to comply with the Communications Act, the Commission's rules, and the terms of its station license. We encourage a continuing dialogue between broadcasters and members of the public to ensure that stations meet their obligations and remain responsive to the needs of the local community. Because you watch and listen to the stations that we license, you can be a valuable and effective advocate to ensure that your area's stations comply with their localism obligation and other FCC requirements.

Viewing the Public Inspection File. Each broadcast licensee, permittee, and applicant must make its station public inspection file available to members of the public at any time during regular business hours. Although you do not need to make an appointment to view the file, making one may be helpful both to the station and to you.

A station that chooses to maintain all or part of its public file on a computer database must provide you a computer terminal if you wish to review the file. As of a date to be determined, television stations will also be required to post most of the content of their public files on their Internet websites, if they have them, or on their state broadcasters association's website, if permitted. Radio stations have not yet been required to post their files on their websites, but may do so if they wish. If you want to view a station's public file over the Internet, you should check its website or contact the station to determine if the file is posted.

You may request copies of materials in the file, which the station must provide to you at a reasonable charge, by visiting the station in person. In addition, if the station's public file is located outside of its community of license (and you live within the station's service area *and* your request does not involve the station's political file), you may request copies of materials in the file over the telephone. To facilitate telephone requests, we require stations to provide you a copy of the current version of this Manual free of charge if you so request. The Manual can help you identify other documents you may ask to have mailed to you. Stations should assist callers in this process and answer questions you may have about the actual contents of the public file. This information may include, for example, the number of pages and time periods covered by a particular ownership report or children's television programming report, or the types of applications actually maintained in the station's public file and the dates on which they were filed with the FCC. Finally, if you ask a broadcast station for photocopies of material in its public inspection file, the station may require you to pay for those photocopies. Therefore, the station may require a guarantee of payment in advance (such as with a deposit or a credit card). The 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 in the file for as long as they remain current and accurate regarding the station.

Material Relating to an FCC Investigation or Complaint. Stations must keep material relating to any matter that is the subject of an FCC investigation (including EEO audits) or

a complaint that the station has violated the Communications Act or FCC rules. The station must keep this material in its file until the FCC notifies it that the material may be discarded. Since the FCC is not involved in disputes regarding matters unrelated to the Communications Act or FCC rules, such as private contractual disputes, stations do not have to retain material relating to such disputes in the public file.

Ownership Reports and Related Material. The public file must contain a copy of the most recent, complete ownership report (FCC Form 323 for commercial stations, FCC Form 323-E for noncommercial educational stations) filed for the station. Among other things, these reports disclose the names of the owners of the station licensee and their ownership interests, list any contracts related to the station that are required to be filed with the FCC, and identify any interests in other broadcast stations held by the station licensee or its owners.

List of Contracts Required to be Filed with the FCC. Stations must keep in the public file either copies of all the contracts that they have to file with the FCC, or an up-to-date list identifying all such contracts. If the station keeps a list and a member of the public asks to see copies of the actual contracts, the station must provide the copies to the requester within seven calendar days. Contracts required to be maintained or listed in the public inspection file include:

- contracts relating to network service (network affiliation contracts);

- contracts relating to ownership or control of the licensee or permittee or its stock. Examples include articles of incorporation, bylaws, agreements providing for the assignment of a license or permit or affecting stock ownership or voting rights (stock options, pledges, or proxies), and mortgage or loan agreements that restrict the licensee or permittee's freedom of operation; and

- management consultant agreements with independent contractors, and contracts relating to the utilization in a management capacity of any person other than an officer, director, or regular employee of the licensee.

Political File. Stations must keep a file which contains "a complete record of a request to purchase broadcast time that: (A) is made by or on behalf of a legally qualified candidate for public office; or (B) communicates a message relating to any political matter of national importance, including: (i) a legally qualified candidate; (ii) any election to federal office; or (iii) a national legislative issue of public importance." The file must identify how the station responded to such requests and, if the request was granted, the charges made, a schedule of time purchased, the times the spots actually aired, the rates charged, and the 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 containing its most significant treatment of community issues during the preceding three months ("issues/programs lists"). The list must briefly describe both the issue and the programming during which the issue was discussed, including the date and time that each

such program was aired and its title and duration. The licensee must keep these lists in the file until the next grant of the station renewal application has become final. Television stations will be required to file a Standardized Television Disclosure Form instead of these lists once that form is approved and made available. The form, which will also be filed quarterly, will require commercial and noncommercial educational television broadcasters to provide detailed information on the efforts of their station to provide programming responsive to issues facing their communities in a standardized format.

Children's Television Programming Reports. As discussed at pages 16-17 of this Manual, the Children's Television Act of 1990 and our rules require each TV station to serve the educational and informational needs of children by means of its overall programming and through programming that is specifically designed to serve such needs. Commercial TV stations must make and retain in their files Children's Television Programming Reports (FCC Form 398) identifying the educational and informational programming for children aired by the station. (Noncommercial educational stations are not required to prepare these reports.) The report must include the name of the person at the station responsible for collecting comments on the station's compliance with the Children's Television Act. The station has to prepare these reports each calendar quarter, and it must place them in the public file separate from the file's other material. The licensee must keep these lists in the file until the next grant of the station renewal application has become final. You can also view each station's reports on our website at http://www.fcc.gov/parents/localprograms.html.

Records Regarding Children's Programming Commercial Limits. As also discussed at page 17 of this Manual, the Children's Television Act of 1990 and our rules limit the type and amount of advertising that may be aired during TV programming directed to children 12 and under. Stations must keep records that substantiate compliance with this limitation in their public files and retain them until the next grant of the station renewal application has become final.

Time Brokerage Agreements. A time brokerage agreement is a type of contract that generally involves a station's sale of blocks of airtime to a third-party broker, who then supplies the programming to fill that time and sells the commercial spot announcements to support the programming. Commercial radio and television stations must keep in their public files a copy of every agreement involving: (1) time brokerage of that station, or (2) time brokerage by any other station owned by the same licensee. These agreements must be maintained in the file for as long as they are in force.

Lists of Donors. Noncommercial educational television and radio stations must keep in their public files a list of donors supporting each specific program. These lists must be retained for two years after the program at issue airs.

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.
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> **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.

COMMENTS OR COMPLAINTS ABOUT A STATION

Comments to Stations and Networks. If you feel the need to do so, we encourage you to write directly to station management or to network officials to comment on their broadcast service. These are the people responsible for creating and selecting the station's programs and announcements and determining station operation. Letters to station and network officials keep

them informed about audience needs and interests, as well as on public opinion on specific material and practices. Individuals and groups can often resolve problems with stations at the local level.

Comments/Complaints to the FCC. We give full consideration to the broadcast complaints, comments, and other inquiries that we receive. As stated above, we encourage you to first contact the station or network directly about programming and operating issues. If your concerns are not resolved in this manner, with the exception of complaints about obscene, indecent, or profane programming, which should be submitted in the manner described at page 15 of this Manual, and complaints about blanketing interference discussed at page 24, the best way to provide all the information the FCC needs to process your complaint about other broadcast matters is to complete fully the on-line complaint Form 2000E, which can be found at http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.html. You can also call in, e-mail or file your complaint in hard copy with the FCC's Consumer Center in the following manner:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Fax number: (202) 418-0232
Telephone number: (888) 225-5322 (voice); (888)835-5322 (TTY)
E-mail address:fccinfo@fcc.gov

If you are submitting an audio or video tape, DVD, CD or other type of media with your complaint, you should send it to the following address to avoid mail processing damage:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
9300 East Hampton Drive
Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743

If you do not use the on-line complaint Form 2000E, your complaint, at a minimum, should 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 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.