

About The FCC

FCC Consumer Facts

Background

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was established by the Communications Act of 1934 as an independent U.S. government agency and is directly responsible to Congress. The FCC regulates interstate (between states) and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable in all of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. possessions.

Five Commissioners direct the FCC. They are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Only three Commissioners can be of the same political party at any given time and none can have a financial interest in any Commission-related business. The President selects one of the Commissioners to serve as Chairperson. All Commissioners, including the Chairperson, have five-year terms, except when filling an unexpired term.

Organization

- The FCC's staff is organized by function. There are seven Bureaus and ten Offices. The Bureaus and the Office of Engineering and Technology process applications for licenses and other filings, analyze complaints, conduct investigations, develop and implement regulatory programs and participate in hearings, among other things. Generally, the Offices provide specialized support services. Bureaus and Offices regularly join forces and share expertise in addressing FCC-related issues.

The Bureaus

- **The Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB)** develops and implements the FCC's consumer policies, including disability access. The Bureau serves as the public face of the Commission through outreach and education, as well as through the Consumer Center, which is responsible for responding to consumer inquiries and complaints. CGB also maintains collaborative partnerships with state, local and tribal governments in such critical areas as emergency preparedness and implementation of new technologies.

The Bureaus (cont'd.)

- **The Enforcement Bureau (EB)** enforces the Communications Act and the FCC's rules. The Enforcement Bureau protects consumers, fosters efficient use of the spectrum, furthers public safety and promotes competition.
- **The International Bureau (IB)** administers the FCC's international telecommunications and satellite programs and policies, including licensing and regulatory functions. The Bureau also has a unique role in promoting pro-competitive policies abroad, coordinating the Commission's global spectrum activities and advocating U.S. interests in international communications and competition. The Bureau works to promote a high quality, reliable, globally interconnected and interoperable communications infrastructure.

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The Bureaus (cont'd.)

- **The Media Bureau (MB)** recommends, develops and administers the policy and licensing programs relating to electronic media - including radio and broadcast, cable and satellite television in the United States and its territories.
- **The Public Safety & Homeland Security Bureau (PSHS)** supports initiatives that strengthen public safety and emergency response capabilities to better enable the FCC to assist the public, law enforcement, hospitals, the communications industry and all levels of government in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic or terrorist attack.
- **The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB)** regulates all FCC domestic wireless telecommunications programs and policies, including licensing. Wireless communications services include cellular, paging, personal communications, public safety and other commercial and private radio services. The Bureau also implements competitive bidding for spectrum auctions.
- **The Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB)** develops and recommends policy goals, objectives, programs and plans for matters concerning wireline telecommunications, such as universal service and the deployment of advanced telecommunications services.

The Offices

- **The Office of Administrative Law Judges** is composed of judges who preside over hearings and issue decisions.
- **The Office of Communication Business Opportunities** promotes competition and innovation in the provision and ownership of telecommunications and information services by supporting opportunities for small businesses, women and minority-owned communications businesses.

The Offices (cont'd.)

- **The Office of Engineering and Technology (OET)** advises the FCC on technical and engineering matters. OET develops and administers FCC decisions regarding spectrum allocations and grants equipment authorizations, experimental licenses and special temporary authority to operate.
- **The Office of the General Counsel (OGC)** serves as the FCC's chief legal advisor.
- **The Office of the Inspector General** conducts and supervises audits and investigations relating to FCC programs and operations.
- **The Office of Legislative Affairs** serves as the liaison between the FCC and Congress, as well as other federal agencies.
- **The Office of the Managing Director** administers and manages the FCC.
- **The Office of Media Relations** informs the media of FCC decisions and serves as the FCC's main point of contact with the media.
- **The Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis** works with the Chairman, Commissioners, Bureaus and Offices to develop a strategic plan and identify policy objectives for the agency. It also provides research, advice and analysis of advanced, novel and non-traditional communications issues.
- **The Office of Workplace Diversity** ensures that the FCC provides employment opportunities for all persons regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or sexual preference.

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For More Information

For information about telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

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

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For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print or audio), please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an email to FCC504@fcc.gov.

To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/.

This document is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceedings or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

