



PUBLIC NOTICE

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COMMISSION LAUNCHES C-BAND EARTH STATION STREAMLINING INITIATIVE

The Commission continues its effort to streamline the satellite earth station process by announcing two procedural changes in the way in which it will process applications for authority to operate “routine” C-band earth stations. These changes will significantly reduce the amount of processing time required for routine C-band earth station applications, effectively improving speed-of-service while minimizing the potential for unacceptable levels of interference to satellite network operations. By continuing to streamline earth station processing when possible, the Commission hopes to keep the regulatory process in step with the expanding satellite marketplace, where increasing competition and consumer demand necessitate that satellite operators provide service as quickly as possible.

I. C-band Earth Station Application Auto-grant Process

Effective January 16, 2001, the International Bureau will automatically grant “routine” satellite earth station applications filed on FCC Form 312 proposing to use the C-band fixed-satellite service frequencies (3700-4200/5925-6425 MHz). C-band earth stations will be considered routine if: (1) the antennas are 4.5 meters or larger in diameter; (2) the proposed station meets the antenna performance standard and power limitations contained in Sections 25.132, 25.209, 25.211, and 25.212 of the Commission’s rules; (3) the station has been successfully coordinated with terrestrial operations; (4) the applicant has notified the Federal Aviation Administration, where necessary, as required by Part 17 and Section 25.113(c) of the Commission's rules; (5) the applicant has provided the environmental impact statement specified in Sections 1.1308 and 1.1311 of the Commission's rules, if the proposed operations will have a significant environmental impact as defined in the Commission's radiation hazard standards in Section 1.1307 of the rules; (6) the applicant seeks to communicate only with Permitted List satellites, *i.e.*, those previously authorized to provide service in the United States; and (7) the proposed station is otherwise consistent with the Commission’s legal requirements.

Under the streamlined procedure, routine C-band earth stations will be considered as granted 35 days from the date that an application appears on public notice as “acceptable for filing,” provided that no objections have been filed during the required 30-day public notice period. This procedure should enable Commission staff to grant routine C-band earth station applications within 55 days of the filing date, which includes a 20-day period for receipt and initial review of the application. This represents a time saving of approximately three weeks per application over the current process. Moreover, further time savings can be realized if applications are filed electronically through the International Bureau Filing System (IBFS) database.

Applicants filing routine C-band earth station applications should clearly indicate in the cover letter

to an application that the proposed station is routine. If the cover letter does not indicate that an application is routine, the application will not be eligible for automatic grant.

II. Reduction in the Number of Required Emission Designators Identified in Applications for Digital Systems

Earth station operators generally use their facilities to provide a wide range of services, including video, voice and data services. Each service uses different frequency bandwidth, modulation techniques, and power levels. Emission designators are a short-hand method used to define the frequency bandwidth and the modulation technique and type of service or combination of services (*i.e.*, the radio frequency carrier class). The primary purpose of the Commission's earth station licensing procedure is both to prevent earth station emissions from interfering with other authorized services and to protect earth station emissions from harmful interference from other services. In this regard, information about emissions most likely to cause interference and the emissions that are most sensitive to interference will ensure that the range of services being provided do not cause interference to other authorized services and that earth station signals they are protected from interference by other services.

At times, earth station applicants will provide in an application emission designators for each individual radiofrequency carrier proposed rather than for each radiofrequency carrier class. It is normal in these cases for one application to contain, on average, 50 emission designators. The process of entering this data into the Bureau's database can take up to three hours. We found in 1999 that it was unnecessary to continue requiring earth station applicants for Ku-band authority to provide all this information.¹ We believe that it is now possible to expand this approach to C-band earth stations.

Consequently, we make the following change to the manner in which earth station applicants should respond to Schedule B, Section B7, of FCC form 312 (Particulars of Operation). Rather than requiring the specification of emission designators for each individual radiofrequency carrier, we will instead require applicants to specify emission designators only for the narrowest bandwidth/lowest power density emission, to reflect the emission most susceptible to interference, and the widest bandwidth/highest power density emission, to reflect the emission most likely to cause interference, for each class of radiofrequency carrier (*e.g.*, 512KG7D 36M0G7D). The last three fields in the emission designator identify the class (*e.g.*, #####G7D defines one class, #####F3F defines another). These emission designators will be the only information entered into the Commission's licensing database and the only information that will appear on public notices and licenses. For earth stations operating in multiple frequency bands, emission designators should be provided for each frequency band.

We are not making any change to the requirements to coordinate with terrestrial wireless operators prior to filing C-band earth station applications with the Commission. In particular, we continue to expect prospective earth station operators to use all applicable emission designators in the coordination process. Rather, we request earth station applicants seeking to use the C-band autogrant process explained above to limit the number of emission designators in their applications. Applications that contain emission designators for individual carriers will not be considered for automatic grant or on a routine basis unless the applicant clearly identifies the most emissions most likely to cause interference and the emissions most sensitive to interference for each radiofrequency carrier class as explained above.

¹ Commission Launches Earth Station Streamlining Initiative, Public Notice, DA 99-1259 (released June 25, 1999).

This new practice will allow us to significantly reduce the time necessary to enter earth station information into our database and consequently will reduce the amount of time required for processing. Further, it will eliminate, in large part, the need for earth station operators to file modification applications whenever they wish to add a new emission since earth station licensees will be authorized to operate within the bandwidth/power range established by the emission designators contained in the license.

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