



PUBLIC NOTICE

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**PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU, WIRELESS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU, AND INTERNATIONAL BUREAU
PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO PART 22 AND PART 90 APPLICANTS SEEKING
VHF AND UHF FREQUENCIES ALONG THE U.S. – CANADA BORDER**

By this Public Notice, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and the International Bureau provide guidance to applicants seeking authorization for certain Part 22 and Part 90 frequencies along the U.S. – Canada border. By clarifying certain licensing procedures in this Public Notice, we expect that applicants will be able to improve the approval rate of proposals for new or modified assignments in the 30-174 MHz and 450-470 MHz frequency bands (VHF and UHF Frequency Bands) along the common border.

Above 30 MHz Agreement

Assignments in the VHF and UHF Frequency Bands along the U.S. – Canada border are subject to coordination pursuant to the Exchange of Notes between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada Concerning the Coordination and Use of Radio Frequencies Above Thirty Megacycles per Second, with Annexes (the “Above 30 MHz Agreement”), as amended. The Above 30 MHz Agreement, which was entered into force on October 24, 1962, and subsequently amended a number of times, applies to both Federal and non-Federal (including state and local government) frequency use for diverse services such as aeronautical mobile, maritime public correspondence, railroad radio, air-to-ground radio, and land mobile radio.¹

The Above 30 MHz Agreement establishes coordination procedures for assignments in the VHF and UHF Frequency Bands and specifies a distance from the border within which coordination must take place. The coordination zones for the VHF and UHF Frequency Bands are defined by Lines A, B, C, and D, as depicted in the attached map.² “Line A” defines the coordination zone in the U.S. along the border between Canada and the lower 48 states of the U.S. “Line B” fulfills the same requirements on the Canadian side. “Line C” and “Line D” are used to establish similar coordination zones along the border between Alaska and Canada.

Under the Above 30 MHz Agreement, both the U.S. and Canada have equal access to the entire VHF and UHF Frequency Bands. Assignments are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Any application for a new or modified U.S. assignment—above three watts Effective Radiated Power (ERP)—in the coordination zone is referred to Canada, as a coordination proposal.³ Canada will approve or reject

¹ See 47 C.F.R. § 1.928 (detailing FCC rule requirements pursuant to the Above 30 MHz Agreement).

² See Attachment A.

³ For commercial applications, the Commission only coordinates proposals below five watts ERP upon request.

a U.S. coordination proposal based on whether or not harmful interference to an incumbent station in Canada is likely to occur from the proposed U.S. assignment.⁴

Industry Canada Licensing Database

Applicants proposing new or modified assignments in the U.S. can improve their prospects for approval by considering the potential impact to existing frequency assignments in Canada prior to applying to the FCC for VHF or UHF channels in the coordination zones. To examine publicly available assignments in Canada, applicants should use the following link to Industry Canada's web site: <http://spectrumdirect.ic.gc.ca/>.

Using the above link, applicants may search the Industry Canada licensing database using any of the various search tools provided under the "Radio Frequency Search" heading. Applicants can examine individual frequencies or frequency bands using the search tools.

Interference Analysis

If a U.S. applicant finds within the coordination zone an existing co-channel or adjacent channel frequency assignment in Canada, the applicant should consider performing an engineering study to determine whether the proposed facilities would be likely to create harmful interference to the assignment in Canada. Any such analysis should consider worst-case scenarios (for example, location of the mobile units at the edge and/or at the highest ground elevation of its service area) and should use generally-accepted engineering practices. Applicants may base their analysis on terrain sensitive propagation models using terrain data consistent with what is used in Canada. Appropriate terrain data can be found at: <http://www.geobase.ca/geobase/en/data/cded/index.html>.⁵

While a signal strength limit is not listed under the treaty, Industry Canada will typically reject a U.S. coordination proposal that is predicted to produce a signal strength exceeding -146 dBW (based on 10% time / 50% location variability) at the location of a Canadian base or mobile station operating on the proposed frequency. Applicants may wish to consider including with their application an engineering exhibit used to determine compliance with this signal strength criterion in order to assist Canadian authorities in their review.⁶

In situations where the interference analyses conducted by a U.S. applicant and those conducted by Industry Canada differ, the Federal Communications Commission and Industry Canada will coordinate to determine an appropriate route forward.⁷

Publicly Available Data

Applicants should be aware that most but not all licensed stations in Canada appear in Canada's publicly available database.⁸ Therefore, the steps we describe above will prove useful as a first step for applicants seeking to avoid obvious conflicts.

⁴ Any proposal with an ERP of three to five watts that is rejected by Canada may be granted secondary status under the treaty if the Commission determines the potential for harmful interference to an incumbent in Canada is limited.

⁵ Applicants may access data for terrain in the U.S. using the following link: http://www.fcc.gov/oet/dtv/dtv_apps.html.

⁶ Information submitted with the initial new or modification application will not be reviewed or sent to Canada due to the automated process of the Commission's Universal Licensing System (ULS). Applicants that want their engineering or justification reviewed based on the initial filing should have the frequency coordinator contact the appropriate Bureau representative listed below so that comments can be sent to Canada.

⁷ Applicants with exceptionally large projects may contact the FCC before filing to address issues related to large-scale deployments in the coordination zone.

Contact Information

For further information regarding treaty issues, contact Brian Marenco, Policy Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at (202) 418-0838 or by email at Brian.Marenco@fcc.gov; for public safety licensing issues, contact Tracy Simmons, Policy Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at (717) 338-2657 or by email at Tracy.Simmons@fcc.gov; and for Industrial/Business licensing issues, contact Terry Fishel, Mobility Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, at (717) 338-2602 or by email at Terry.Fishel@fcc.gov.

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⁸ Industry Canada indicates that over 90% of all stations licensed in Canada appear in the publicly available database.

Attachment A

Map: Frequency Coordination Between the United States and Canada



By clicking on the following link, applicants can access a program on the FCC's web site which will determine if a set of coordinates is within the coordination zone:
http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/index.htm?job=line_a_c