



PUBLIC NOTICE

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ENFORCEMENT BUREAU ENHANCES PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE COMPLAINTS

In its *Field Modernization Order*,¹ the Commission directed the Enforcement Bureau (EB) to establish procedures for public safety and industry complainants to escalate their complaints to ensure that EB's field offices timely respond to these complaints. This Public Notice implements that direction by committing to enhance the Commission's complaint intake and case management systems. These procedures may be refined based on experience, the Commission's resources, and other enforcement priorities. We are confident that this escalation process will improve EB's responsiveness and performance for public safety and industry interference complaints.

Background. Complaints from public safety and industry entities generally come to the FCC separately from the agency's general complaint web portal (<https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us>). Most public safety complaints come either directly to the closest EB field office or through the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau's Operations Center (FCCOPS@fcc.gov or 202/418-1122). The Operations Center then refers those complaints to the relevant EB field office. Most wireless carrier interference complaints come through EB's Cellular Telephone Interference Complaint webpage (<http://transition.fcc.gov/eb/ctix/>). Those complaints are automatically forwarded to the closest EB field office. Generally, other industry complainants contact the EB field office directly or file through the FCC website.

The Commission has historically encouraged public safety and industry regulatees to exhaust their own resources before filing an interference complaint with the FCC. According to their representatives, the public safety and industry communities have done so, and only contact the FCC about interference issues when they are unable to resolve the interference or identify its source. In such cases, time is of the essence for the critical technical assistance, mediation, or enforcement provided by EB's field offices. Therefore, EB is establishing complaint escalation procedures to ensure that critical public safety and industry interference issues are addressed in a timely manner. As part of this effort, EB plans to enhance the interference complaint intake process to improve the transparency, consistency, and predictability of its responses to such complaints and help complainants stay informed of the status of their complaint.

Enhanced web intake for public safety/industry interference complaints. EB will work with the Office of the Managing Director, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau to establish a web portal at www.fcc.gov for complaints from public safety and industry interference complainants. Once operational, the complaint intake system should allow such complainants to receive immediate confirmation of the FCC's receipt of their complaints, as well as permit them to track the status of their complaints within the FCC. The complaint intake system also will automatically transfer complaint information from the web portal to EB's case management

¹ *Reorganization of the Enforcement Bureau's Field Operations*, Order, 30 FCC Rcd 7649 (2015).

database, accelerating investigations and reducing the possibility of human error. The planned complaint intake enhancements will not supersede existing methods used by public safety entities to communicate with the FCC.

Categorization of complaints. The complaint intake system will require certain information from each complainant, such as contact information, whether the issue presents an imminent threat to public safety, the location(s) of the affected site(s) (e.g., latitude/longitude), the impacted frequencies, the severity and duration of the interference, the regularity of the interference, information about the suspected interference source, and the remedial measures already attempted. These factors will trigger an appropriate designation of the complaint as high, medium, or low priority for investigation and response.

Confirmation of Complaint Receipt. Once the new FCC complaint web portal is operational, when a public safety or industry entity files an interference complaint using that portal, the complainant will receive immediate confirmation that the Commission has received its complaint. This confirmation will include contact information for the field office assigned the complaint, as well as its priority designation.

Initial Complaint Response. Field offices will contact complainants raising high priority (including public safety) issues within 1 calendar day of filing with the FCC. For medium priority interference complaints, the field office will contact the complainant within 2 business days of filing. Low priority interference complaints will receive an initial response within 5 business days of filing. Such responses may be made by telephone or email to the complainant and will include the following information:

- Contact information for the field agent assigned to the matter
- Expected nature and timeframe for investigation or other response
- Request for additional information from the complainant, if necessary

Escalation Procedure. We are confident that public safety and industry interference complainants will receive such initial responses in a timely manner. The field agent assigned to the complaint should be the primary point of contact for questions and status inquiries. If the complainant does not receive an initial response, the complainant should contact the field office listed in the confirmation message. In the event that the complainant wishes to escalate its complaint to field management, however, it may proceed as follows:

- Complainant may contact the relevant Regional Director within 1 week after the period for the initial response
- Complainant may contact the Field Director within 2 weeks after the period for the initial response

Contact Information. To ensure that complainants can escalate their complaints to the appropriate field manager, within 30 days of implementation of these procedures, EB will release contact information for the new Field Director and new Regional Directors.

Complaint Tracking. The Field Director will track the status of complaints under investigation by the EB field offices and will routinely report to the Office of the Bureau Chief on the status of such complaints. EB also will pursue enhancements to its electronic recordkeeping systems to issue automatic status updates to complainants.

Conclusion. The public safety/industry interference complaint escalation process will improve complainants' ability to stay informed of the status of their complaint. This process also will enable public safety/industry stakeholders to develop mutually beneficial relationships with the EB field agents in their area. By streamlining interference complaint intake and response, this process will help serve the overall efficiency and resource management goals of the ongoing field modernization effort and result in more effective enforcement for our highest priority interference complaints.

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