



PUBLIC NOTICE

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VHF, UHF AND 700 MHZ INTEROPERABILITY SPECTRUM ADMINISTRATION

PS Docket No. 15-199

By this *Public Notice*, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) reminds communications officials in each state, district and territory that they must update their administrative procedures for spectrum in the 700 MHz narrowband public safety band (769-775/799-805 MHz) designated for interoperability communications.¹ Hereby, the Bureau also notifies such communications officials that they may elect to administer railroad police use of the VHF (150-174 MHz, and 220-222 MHz), and UHF (450-470 MHz) nationwide interoperability channels.²

By way of background, in 1998 the Commission adopted a band plan for the 700 MHz public safety band which included channels dedicated to interoperability communications.³ In 2001, the Commission decided that the states, in the first instance, should be responsible for administration of those interoperability channels. In light of the central role that states provide in managing emergency communications, the Commission concluded that the states are best suited for administering the interoperability spectrum and that state-level administration would promote safety of life and property through seamless, coordinated communications on the interoperability spectrum.⁴ However, recognizing that some states may choose not to administer this spectrum, the Commission established safeguards to ensure that a local or regional entity would be responsible for administering the interoperability spectrum. The Commission also recommended, but did not require, that the states form State Interoperability Executive Committees (SIEC) to administer the interoperability spectrum. In the alternative, the Commission provided that states could delegate administration of the interoperability channels to 700

¹ The Commission has defined “interoperability” as “an essential communications link within the public safety and public service wireless communications systems which permits units from two or more different entities to interact with one another and to exchange information according to a prescribed method in order to achieve predictable results.” *Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communications Requirements from the Year 2010*, First Report and Order and Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 14 FCC Rcd 152, 189-190 para. 76 (1998) (*Report and Order*).

² *Amendment of Part 90 of the Commission's Rules to Enable Railroad Police Officers to Access Public Safety Interoperability and Mutual Aid Channels*, Report and Order, FCC-16-113 at para. 36 (released Aug. 23, 2016) (*Railroad Police Order*).

³ *Report and Order*, 14 FCC Rcd 154 para. 2.

⁴ *See Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010*, Fourth Report and Order and Fifth Notice of Proposed Rule Making, 16 FCC Rcd 2020, 2025-26 para. 11-13 (2001).

MHz Regional Planning Committees (RPC). On September 21, 2002, the Commission reported the results of the decisions made by the states through either their action or inaction regarding administration of the 700 MHz narrowband interoperability spectrum.⁵

Recently, the Commission directed the Bureau to issue a Public Notice reminding states that they may update their previous 700 MHz interoperability elections.⁶ The Commission also provided that states may elect to administer railroad police use of the VHF and UHF interoperability channels or delegate administration to the RPCs.⁷ Below we outline the process for states to update their interoperability elections for the 700 MHz, VHF and UHF interoperability channels:⁸

- First, for states that already have a Commission-recognized SIEC, or equivalent, the head of that entity must submit a letter to the Commission with current contact information and disclose, in the letter, whether the SIEC, or equivalent, intends to administer railroad police use of the VHF and UHF interoperability channels or delegate that function to an RPC.
- Second, states that have not established a SIEC, or equivalent, and wish to do so, shall submit a letter to the Commission signed by the Governor indicating either that the state will establish a SIEC, or equivalent, or will assign the SIEC role to an existing state agency to administer the VHF, UHF and 700 MHz spectrum.

Letters providing the above information shall be sent to Michael J. Wilhelm, Deputy Chief, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 445-12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554. A list containing interoperability spectrum administration point of contact information is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/public-safety-and-homeland-security/policy-and-licensing-division/land-mobile-radio-public-safety>. For further information, or to request SIEC contact information to be posted to the Commission's 700 MHz public safety web site, contact John A. Evanoff, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at (202) 418-0848 or via email to John.Evanoff@fcc.gov.

Action by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau.

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⁵ See *700 MHz Public Safety Band – Announcement of Updates of Interoperability Spectrum Administration Decisions*, Public Notice, 17 FCC Rcd 16535 (WTB 2002).

⁶ *Railroad Police Order*, FCC-16-113 at para. 34.

⁷ *Id.* at para. 36.

⁸ We note that the 800 MHz Regional Planning Committees are responsible for administering railroad police use of the five NPSPAC (National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee) mutual aid channels. *Id.* at paras. 31, 33.