



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU ANNOUNCE THE DECEMBER 18, 2020 DECOMMISSIONING OF OPTIONAL PRIVATE LAND MOBILE APPLICATION FILING TOOLS

Since 2013, all VHF/UHF Industrial/Business and Public Safety Radio Pool licensees in the 150-174 MHz and 421-470 MHz bands have been required to operate on channels with a maximum bandwidth of 12.5 kilohertz or equivalent efficiency, unless they are operating under the terms of a waiver.¹ The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (the Bureaus) have taken a number of steps to ensure that licensees are aware of this narrowbanding requirement and to assist licensees in updating their license information to reflect narrowband operations.²

In particular, the Commission developed and made available in its Universal Licensing System (ULS) two optional tools to simplify the filing of certain types of narrowbanding modification applications: (1) The Modify Wideband Emissions tool, and (2) The Remove Wideband Emissions tool. Licensees of approximately 80,000 stations have used these tools to

¹ See *Implementation of Sections 309(j) and 337 of the Communications Act of 1934 as Amended*, Second Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 18 FCC Rcd 3034 (2003); *Implementation of Sections 309(j) and 337 of the Communications Act of 1934 as Amended*, Third Memorandum Opinion and Order, Third Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order, 19 FCC Rcd 25045 (2004); *Implementation of Sections 309(j) and 337 of the Communications Act of 1934 as Amended*, Order, 25 FCC Rcd 8861 (2010); see also 47 CFR §§ 90.203(j), 90.209(b). Specifically, the narrowbanding deadlines apply to frequencies in the 150.8-162.0125 MHz, 173.2-173.4 MHz, and 421-512 MHz bands, but the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, and Office of Engineering and Technology have waived the January 1, 2013, deadline for licensees in the 470-512 MHz band. See *Implementation of Sections 309(j) and 337 of the Communications Act of 1934 as Amended*, Order, 27 FCC Rcd 4213, on recon., Order on Reconsideration, 27 FCC Rcd 14770 (WTB/PSHSB/OET 2012).

² See *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Provide Additional Guidance Regarding Post-Narrowbanding License Renewal Procedures for Private Land Mobile Radio Operations in the 150-174 and 421-470 MHz Bands*, Public Notice, 31 FCC Rcd 127 (WTB/PSHSB 2016); *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Provide Additional Guidance Regarding Post-Narrowbanding License Renewal Procedures for Private Land Mobile Radio Operations in the 150-174 and 421-470 MHz Bands*, Public Notice, 29 FCC Rcd 2088 (WTB/PSHSB 2014); *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, and Office of Engineering and Technology Provide Guidance on Compliance with Narrowbanding Requirement Now in Effect for Private Land Mobile Radio Operations in the 150-174 and 421-470 MHz Bands*, Public Notice, 28 FCC Rcd 2296 (WTB/PSHSB/OET 2013).

comply with our narrowbanding requirement. The number of licensees submitting applications using these tools has decreased dramatically over recent years, as more than 80% of required call signs are estimated to have completed their narrowbanding. These tools seldom are used today as a result.³

We therefore find that maintaining these tools is no longer justified. By this Public Notice, the Bureaus announce that these two tools will be decommissioned on December 18, 2020.

Decommissioning of these tools is in the public interest. The number of filers has decreased significantly and there now are alternative mechanisms to file these applications for any remaining callsigns in need of narrowbanding. Moreover, the ease of use of the ULS Online Filing systems has improved since these tools were introduced such that there is no continued need to maintain these tools to accommodate any remaining late filers. If these tools were not decommissioned, the Commission would have to invest further funds in migrating the tools as part of our ongoing ULS modernization effort and to meet network security requirements. Given that these tools no longer are necessary, the substantial government costs to maintain and upgrade these tools no longer is justified.

Licensees seeking to update their licenses to modify or remove wideband emission designators can continue filing modification applications using ULS Online Filing rather than the Modify Wideband Emission tool or the Remove Wideband Emissions tool. Filers are reminded that applications filed solely for the purpose of removing wideband emission designators do not require frequency coordination or payment of Commission fees.⁴

For questions or additional information on how to file applications to remove or modify wideband emissions, users should consult the web at <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/narrowbanding-overview> or contact the Licensing Support Center at 1-877-480-3201 or submit an online help request at: <https://esupport.fcc.gov/onlinerequest.htm>.

Licensees and frequency coordinators who have questions concerning this *Public Notice* and the narrowbanding requirement may contact Gary Devlin of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Mobility Division, (717) 338-2618, gary.devlin@fcc.gov, or Roberto Mussenden of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Policy and Licensing Division, (202) 418-1428, Roberto.Mussenden@fcc.gov.

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³ In 2016, more than 2,000 applications were filed using the Narrowbanding Tool, while in 2020, there have been fewer than 100. Similarly, usage of the Remove Wideband Emissions tool has dropped by approximately 90%.

⁴ To file under the fee exemption, the applicant filling-out FCC Form 601 must enter 'yes' responses to Items 9 (exempt from the application fee) and 10 (exempt from the regulatory fee). In addition, the applicant must respond 'yes' to Item 8 on Form 601 (attachment being filed) and submit an attachment explaining why the application is fee-exempt. Applicants should use the 'fee exemption' attachment type. The Bureaus recommend that licensees reference section 1.1116(a) in the attachment explanation field and indicate that the filing was made exclusively to comply with the Commission's narrowbanding mandate.