**DA 21-1215**

**Released: September 28, 2021**

**wireless telecommunications bureau reminds wireless handset manufacturers and service providers of upcoming changes to hearing aid compatibility deployment benchmarks**

**WT Docket Nos. 15-285, 20-3**

The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau reminds wireless handset manufacturers and service providers of upcoming increases in deployment benchmarks for hearing aid-compatible handsets. Specifically, the benchmark for handset manufacturers will increase from 66% to 85% on October 4, 2021,[[1]](#footnote-3) and the benchmark for Tier I service providers will increase from 66% to 85% on April 4, 2022.[[2]](#footnote-4) For non-Tier I service providers, the benchmark will increase from 66% to 85% on April 3, 2023.[[3]](#footnote-5)

The upcoming changes to the deployment benchmarks will ensure that at least 85% of covered wireless handsets are hearing aid-compatible in the near future. The Commission adopted a schedule for phased increases after finding that the new benchmarks would significantly benefit consumers by expanding access to hearing aid-compatible handsets.[[4]](#footnote-6) The Commission continues to assess whether further changes are needed to facilitate use of wireless handsets by those with hearing loss, including whether to require 100% of covered handsets to be hearing aid-compatible.[[5]](#footnote-7) The Commission will also review the Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force’s final report on this topic, which is due by December 31, 2022.[[6]](#footnote-8)

The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau reminds handset manufacturers and service providers that they must comply with the new 85% benchmark and the Commission’s other hearing aid compatibility rules.[[7]](#footnote-9) Failing to comply with the benchmark or other hearing aid compatibility rules could lead to enforcement proceedings and possible forfeitures.

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**– FCC –**

1. 47 CFR § 20.19(c)(1)(ii). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
2. 47 CFR § 20.19(c)(2)(ii). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
3. 47 CFR § 20.19(c)(3)(ii). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
4. *Improvements to Benchmarks and Related Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 15-285, Report and Order, 31 FCC Rcd 9336, 9345, para. 25 (2016) (*Benchmark Order*). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
5. *See* *Amendment of the Commission’s Rules Governing Standards for Hearing Aid-Compatible Handsets*, WT Docket No. 20-3, Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 4566, 4574-75, 4577-78, paras. 19-20, 27-28 (2021) (*2021 ANSI Standard Order*). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
6. *See 2021 ANSI Standard Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 4577-78, paras. 27-28; *Benchmark Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9349, 9352-53, paras. 34, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
7. *See* 47 CFR § 20.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)