



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

For immediate release:
March 13, 2003

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**COMMISSION ACTS TO ENSURE THAT PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE ABLE
TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN FCC PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**
*New "Accessibility Handbook" Details Uniform Procedures for Accommodations at the
Commission*

Washington, DC -- The Commission has taken several actions to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate fully in FCC programs and activities.

The FCC has long been committed to fostering an attitude of inclusion and a commitment to access in all Commission programs and activities. While certain aspects of providing access for people with disabilities can be clearly visible (e.g., sign language interpreters, ramps, and braille documents), other aspects may easily pass unnoticed (e.g., remembering to stand facing co-workers who are hard of hearing so that they can speechread/lipread).

So that all Commission staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed in providing the accommodations required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Commission has compiled, for use by the Commission staff, the "Accessibility Handbook" that details a uniform and comprehensive approach for compliance. It is a clear and comprehensive collection of guidelines, information, and procedures to ensure that the Commission is accessible to individuals with disabilities. It will be particularly helpful for planning events so that persons with disabilities will be able to participate fully.

The "Accessibility Handbook" is available on the FCC Intranet and on the FCC's Internet Web site.

In addition, to serve the disability community more efficiently, the Commission stated that requests for accommodation requiring the assistance of other persons (e.g., an American Sign Language interpreter) should be made five business days before a Commission event. If the request is made on less than five days notice, however, the Commission will make every effort to secure the services of a person to provide the requested assistance.

To ensure that its services for persons with disabilities remain reflective of current needs and available accommodations, the Commission will conduct a self-evaluation process every three years. During the reviews the Commission will seek public comment on the accessibility of its programs and activities as required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

To reflect the language in the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Commission made editorial amendments to its rules to replace the terms “handicap,” “individual with a handicap,” and “individuals with handicaps” with the terms “disability,” “individual with a disability,” and “individuals with disabilities,” respectively.

Action by the Commission March 4, 2003, by Order (FCC 03-48). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein with Chairman Powell and Commissioners Copps and Adelstein issuing separate statements.

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