



NEWS

Federal Communications FCC
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Cir 1974).

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT
Michelle Russo (202) 418-2358

FCC IMPLEMENTS NEW ELECTRONIC FILING CAPABILITY *Marks Final Step in Implementation of COALS*

Washington, DC – The Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) today expanded electronic filing capabilities to make it easier for multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) to submit applications, reports, and other documents. This action represents more progress in the FCC’s modernization initiative, allowing the agency to conduct effective and timely licensing activities and respond to Congress, consumers, and the communications industries in a timely manner.

Today’s Report and Order launches the final step in implementation of the Cable Operations and Licensing System (COALS) by amending FCC rules and creating three new forms to allow for electronic filing. COALS makes license and cable operational information more accessible to FCC staff, enabling the staff to more efficiently monitor spectrum usage and competitive conditions in the cable and multichannel video marketplace.

When COALS is fully implemented, MVPDs will be able to use the Internet to file cable community registrations, aeronautical frequency notifications, operational change information, cable television system reports, annual signal leakage reports, and Cable Television Relay Service (CARS) applications. As outlined in the Report and Order, electronic filing of each type of data will become mandatory six months after the FCC has determined that the form for collecting it has been reliably automated. Following today’s action, as required by the Government Paperwork Reduction Act, the FCC will publish a notice in the Federal Register seeking public comment on the new forms, which are included as an Appendix in today’s Report and Order. The new forms are also subject to approval by the Office of Management and Budget.

The FCC said that COALS will provide sufficient benefits and ease of use for almost all applicants and filers. In order to address concerns that mandatory filing may impose burdens on small operators, the FCC did two things: (1) provided a transitional period during which electronic filing would be optional; and (2) provided for waivers where electronic filing would impose an unreasonable burden. Also, in order to ensure a smooth transfer to the new system, the Media Bureau will update its web site to provide helpful information on COALS and conduct tutorials on its use.

Action by the Commission, March 13, 2003 by Report and Order (FCC 03-55). Chairman Powell, with Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein.

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Media Bureau contacts: Michael Lance, Wayne McKee at (202) 418-7200. TTY: (202) 418-7172