



NEWS

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

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FCC PROPOSES CHANGES IN TECHNICAL REGULATIONS FOR UNLICENSED DEVICES TO FACILITATE DEPLOYMENT OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES AND TO STREAMLINE REGULATIONS TO INCREASE FLEXIBILITY

Washington, DC – As part of its ongoing efforts to adapt its regulations to foster continued technological advancements and to review and streamline regulations in light of regulatory experience and changes in the marketplace, the Federal Communications Commission today asked for public comment on changes to several technical rules in Parts 2 and 15. The rule changes, proposed in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, would permit operators, including wireless internet service providers (WISPs), and device manufacturers to more readily modify or substitute technically equivalent parts, facilitating increased deployment of broadband services. WISPs use unlicensed devices to provide a broadband alternative for rural and underserved areas and, while they are a relatively nascent industry, their deployment rates have been increasing rapidly.

In the Notice, the Commission proposes several rule changes that will remove unnecessary regulatory impediments to deployment of advanced technologies for wireless networking. For example, the Commission proposes to amend its rules to specifically provide for the use of sectorized and phased array antenna systems. Often called “smart antennas,” these antenna systems focus their radio transmissions according to the geographic locations of their users. Use of these advanced antenna technologies will increase spectrum efficiency because they allow for greater re-use of the same radio frequencies and may permit increased spectrum sharing among multiple wireless networks.

The Notice also seeks comment on rule modifications that would facilitate deployment of next-generation Bluetooth devices, which operate at data rates up to three times faster than current devices. The rule changes would enable new devices to be backward compatible.

In addition, the Notice proposes rule changes that would relax the regulatory constraints related to system design and equipment authorizations for unlicensed devices. Equipment authorizations have historically been done on a system basis with little flexibility to change antennas or make other modifications to custom tailor a system for a particular application. Increasingly, these equipment authorization limitations are proving unnecessary and may indeed be limiting deployment of wireless networks.

Finally, the Notice seeks comments on several rule changes that would further harmonize technical rules applied to equivalent unlicensed devices, including the measurement procedures for digital modulation devices and applicable power spectral densities for the same regions of the spectrum.

Action by the Commission September 10, 2003, by *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* in (FCC 03-223). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin, and Adelstein, with Chairman Powell issuing a statement and Commissioners Copps, Martin, and Adelstein issuing separate statements.

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