



NEWS

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FCC OPENS PROCEEDING TO STREAMLINE AND IMPROVE NETWORK OUTAGE REPORTING

Washington, D.C. - In recognition of the increasing substitutability of different forms of two-way communications, and the Commission's need for prompt information about significant disruptions to those communications, the Commission adopted a Notice today that proposes to require wireless, wireline, cable, and satellite telecommunications providers to report information electronically to the Commission about significant disruptions to their communications systems. For ease of reporting, the Commission proposed the use of an electronic template that would be used by communications providers to provide the requested information via the Internet. Taken together, these proposed actions would facilitate more reliable telecommunications throughout the United States and promote Homeland Security. This builds on the telecommunications industry's efforts to date to improve outage reporting.

The electronic template, which was derived from the Commission's experience in administering network outage reporting requirements for wireline telephone companies, would simplify and improve the Commission's reporting requirements. As proposed, both wireless and satellite providers would be subject, for the first time, to the Commission's reporting requirements. Currently, only wireline and cable telephony communications providers are required to report. The increasing use of cell phones and pagers, as well as the Nation's growing dependence on satellite communications as critical infrastructure, necessitated these proposed changes to the Commission's rules.

In addition, the Commission proposes to require network outage reports whenever certain critical facilities are affected, including, for example, E911 facilities, airports, and nuclear power plants. The Commission also proposed to require network outage reports whenever especially critical transmission and network control technologies are disrupted.

Action by the Commission, February 12, 2004 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 04-30). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein, with separate statements issued by Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Martin and Adelstein.

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