



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).

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COMMISSION PROMOTES DEPLOYMENT OF BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS ON VESSELS

Washington, D.C.- Today, the Federal Communications Commission adopted rules that further the Commission's goal of promoting market-based deployment of broadband technologies. The new licensing and service rules for satellite earth stations on vessels (ESVs) in the C and Ku bands will provide regulatory certainty to ESV licensees, while protecting existing users in the bands.

ESV systems generally consist of a network operations center, one or more land-based "gateway" earth stations and a number of earth stations on vessels. ESV networks can provide telecommunications services, including internet access, to users on cruise and merchant ships, ferries, barges and other vessels. Under the new rules, ESV licenses will be issued to applicants who demonstrate that they are capable of controlling all aspects of their ESV network and who comply with applicable technical parameters in the C and Ku-bands.

- In the C-band (5925-6425 and 3700-4200 MHz) ESV operators currently share the band with the fixed terrestrial and fixed-satellite service. To protect the incumbent fixed terrestrial service, ESVs will be subject to operation and spectrum limitations and coordination requirements. To protect fixed satellite operators, the new rules have placed power limits on ESV operations.
- In the Ku-band (14.0-14.5 and 11.7-12.2 GHz) ESV coordination with the fixed terrestrial service is not required because these operations are limited in the band. In the 14.0-14.5 GHz band, ESV coordination is required near a limited number of federal government earth stations. As in the C-band, the new rules place power limits on ESV operations to protect fixed satellite operators. ESVs will be permitted in portions of the "extended" Ku-band downlink (10.95-11.2 GHz and 11.45-12.2 GHz) and must accept all interference from fixed service operations.

To ensure expeditious processing and regulatory certainty, the Commission adopted blanket licensing procedures and a fifteen year license term.

For foreign registered ESVs, the Commission established a separate regulatory framework to allow communication to take place near the United States without causing harmful interference to domestic operations.

Action by the Commission on December 15, 2004, by Report and Order (FCC 04-286). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin, and Adelstein. Separate statement issued by Chairman Powell.

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