



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. Cir. 1974).

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FCC LAUNCHES REVIEW OF CLOSED CAPTIONING RULES

Washington, DC -- The Commission has begun a proceeding to assess how its closed captioning rules are succeeding in ensuring that video programming is accessible to the millions of deaf and hard of hearing Americans and whether any revisions should be made to enhance the effectiveness of those rules. It asked for comments on several compliance and quality issues relating to closed captioning that were raised in a Petition for Rulemaking filed by Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI), the National Association of the Deaf, Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., the Association for Late Deafened Adults, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network.

The current closed captioning rules have been in place since January 1, 1998. At the time the rules were adopted, the Commission indicated it would review them after closed captioning was implemented to determine whether its expectations regarding closed captioning were being met. The Commission initiated this review as a follow-up to the Commission's prior assurances and in response to TDI's Petition. The Commission also noted that, effective January 1, 2006, all non-exempt new programming must be captioned, and this rulemaking proceeding provides an opportunity to ensure that video programming distributors are prepared to fulfill this requirement.

The Commission is interested in comments about various aspects of closed captioning. It asked commenters to address the following types of issues:

- Is there a need to adopt standards for non-technical quality of closed captioning, such as, for example, accuracy of transcription? What would be the costs of mandating such standards? Should any non-technical quality standards be different for pre-produced programs versus live programming?
- Is there a need for additional procedures to prevent and remedy technical problems such as, for example, captions not being delivered intact, or captions ending before the end of the programming? If so, what form should they take?
- Should distributors have specific mechanisms in place for monitoring and maintenance?

- Should the existing complaint procedure be changed?
- Should the Commission establish specific per violation forfeiture amounts for non-compliance with the captioning rules?
- Should the Commission require video programming distributors to file compliance reports as to the amount of closed captioning they provide?
- Should the ban on counting electronic newsroom technique captioning to meet captioning requirements be extended beyond the top 25 markets?
- What is the current status on the supply of available captioners?
- Should the Commission require electronic filing of requests for exemption from the closed captioning requirements?

Action by the Commission July 14, 2005, by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 05-142). Chairman Martin, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, and Adelstein. Separate statements issued by Chairman Martin, Abernathy, Copps, and Adelstein.

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