



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 ACTS ON REQUESTS FOR WAIVER FROM HEARING AID COMPATIBILITY RULES

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Memorandum Opinion and Order (Order) that addresses waiver requests filed by 19 non-nationwide wireless carriers seeking relief from certain portions of the FCC's hearing aid compatibility rules. These rules are designed to ensure that persons with hearing disabilities have full access to digital wireless services.

In 2003, the FCC required that, by September 16, 2005, non-nationwide wireless carriers must offer at least two wireless handset models for each wireless network technology (*e.g.*, CDMA, GSM) that meet a U3 rating under the ANSI (American National Standards Institute) hearing aid compatibility standard for reduced radio frequency (RF) interference. The FCC also requires that hearing aid-compatible handsets comply with certain labeling requirements. Nineteen non-nationwide carriers filed waiver requests in which they sought extensions of time to comply with the September 16, 2005, deadline, arguing that hearing aid-compatible handsets were not available to them as of that date.

In today's Order, the FCC took the following actions:

- Granted waiver requests of 5 carriers: Dobson Communications, SunCom Wireless, Iowa Wireless, South Slope Wireless, and Virgin Mobile
- Granted in part and denied in part waiver requests filed by 5 carriers: Pine Cellular, South Central Utah Telephone Assoc., CC Communications, IT&E Overseas, and UBET Wireless
- Denied waiver requests of 6 carriers: XIT Cellular, Blue Sky Communications, CT Cube, WUE, Cellular Phone of Kentucky, and Litchfield County Cellular
- Dismissed as unnecessary waiver requests filed by 3 carriers: Leaco Rural Telephone Cooperative, SLO Cellular, and Entertainment Unlimited

In addition, those wireless carriers to which the FCC did not grant full waivers, and which appear to be currently in violation of the FCC's hearing aid compatibility rules or to have been in violation in the past, were referred to the Enforcement Bureau for further review. The full text of today's Order is available on the FCC web site at www.fcc.gov and through the FCC Daily Digest.

Action by the Commission on April 6, 2007, by Memorandum Opinion and Order (FCC 07-51).
Chairman Martin and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate, and McDowell.

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