



# 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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## FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO ITS HEARING AID COMPATIBILITY RULES

Washington, D.C. – In a Second Report and Order (Order) and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Notice) released today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) addressed two outstanding issues related to its hearing aid compatibility rules and sought comment on possible changes to these rules. These rules are designed to ensure that persons with hearing disabilities have full access to digital wireless services.

In the Notice released today, the FCC requested input on several proposed changes to its hearing aid compatibility requirements. In particular, the FCC tentatively concluded that it should adopt a number of proposed rule changes set forth by representatives of both the wireless industry and the deaf and hard of hearing community in a “Joint Consensus Plan” submitted to the FCC in June 2007. The proposals in the Joint Consensus Plan include new requirements and deadlines for offering hearing aid-compatible handsets, including modifications to the current February 18, 2008, benchmark regarding the number of hearing aid compatible handsets that must be offered. In addition, the Joint Consensus Plan recommends that the FCC: 1) require wireless operators and manufacturers to include in their portfolio of hearing aid-compatible handsets a certain number of new models and models with different levels of functionality, 2) adopt the 2007 version of the ANSI (American National Standards Institute) technical standard, and 3) impose new reporting obligations. The Notice stated the FCC’s intent to issue a Report and Order in advance of the February 18, 2008, benchmark, but stayed enforcement of that benchmark until April 18, 2008, to provide advance notification to manufacturers and service providers of revised requirements.

In addition, today’s Notice sought comment on ways to ensure that the FCC’s hearing aid compatibility requirements will continue to be effective in a rapidly-evolving wireless marketplace with a range of new technologies and services.

Finally, today’s Notice sought renewed comment on two additional issues. The first is whether the FCC should require independent cell phone retailers, those not owned or operated by wireless carriers, to make hearing aid-compatible phones available to consumers for in-store testing. The second is whether the FCC should change the *de minimis* exception, which exempts wireless service providers and equipment manufacturers that offer two or fewer digital handset models (per air interface) from the hearing aid compatibility rules. The FCC had sought comment on those issues in 2005, and today’s Order decided, based on the record in the proceeding, not to modify those rules at this time.

Action by the Commission on November 5, 2007, by Second Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 07-192). Chairman Martin and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate, and McDowell.

For additional information, contact Michael Rowan at (202) 418-1883 or [Michael.Rowan@fcc.gov](mailto:Michael.Rowan@fcc.gov).

WT Docket Nos. 01-309 and 07-250.

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