



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 27, 2008

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Chelsea Fallon: (202) 418-7991

FCC ACTS ON REQUESTS FOR WAIVER OF 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 wireless service providers and a handset manufacturer seeking additional time to comply with a 2006 benchmark in the FCC’s hearing aid compatibility rules. The FCC’s hearing aid compatibility rules are designed to ensure that persons with hearing disabilities have full access to digital wireless services. The FCC granted or denied the individual waiver requests based on the respective showings made by each petitioner.

In first establishing hearing aid compatibility requirements for wireless handsets in 2003, the FCC imposed various compliance benchmarks designed to ensure that consumers with hearing loss have access to digital wireless handsets that operate effectively with hearing aids. Among other requirements, the FCC mandated that, by September 18, 2006, wireless service providers and handset manufacturers must offer at least two wireless handset models for each wireless network technology (e.g., CDMA, GSM) that meet at least a T3 rating under the ANSI (American National Standards Institute) hearing aid compatibility standard for inductive coupling. This requirement ensures that the handsets can work effectively with hearing aids that operate in telecoil mode.

Today’s Order addresses 46 petitions filed by 98 facilities-based wireless carriers, one handset manufacturer, and one mobile virtual network operator (MVNO). In general, the petitions seek some limited additional time to comply with the requirement that at least two T3-rated handsets be offered. The FCC granted a petitioner’s waiver request to the extent it came into compliance no later than January 1, 2007, and demonstrated a reasonable basis for the limited extension of time.

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, have been 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 February 26, 2008, by Memorandum Opinion and Order (FCC 08-67). Chairman Martin and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate, and McDowell.

For additional information, contact Joseph Levin at (202) 418-0640 or Joseph.Levin@fcc.gov.

WT Docket No. 01-309.

– FCC –

News and other information about the Federal Communications Commission
is available at www.fcc.gov.