



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 COMMENCES INQUIRY ON SURVIVABILITY OF AMERICA'S BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Washington D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today launched an inquiry on the ability of existing broadband networks to withstand significant damage or severe overloads as a result of natural disasters, terrorist attacks, pandemics or other major public emergencies, as recommended in the National Broadband Plan.

As Americans increasingly rely on broadband services for so many aspects of their lives, including public safety and national security, it is critical for the FCC to gain a better understanding of the survivability of existing networks and explore potential measures to reduce network vulnerability to failures in network equipment or severe overload conditions in emergencies.

Although core broadband networks are generally presumed to be quite resilient, there may be weaknesses closer to the network edge. Accordingly, today's Notice of Inquiry (NOI) seeks comment, analysis and information on the present state of the resiliency and redundancy of broadband networks to withstand physical damage and severe network overload. This is a vitally important first step in ensuring that the FCC can take all necessary actions to ensure ongoing broadband communications in times of disaster or crisis.

The NOI includes the following questions related to the resiliency of broadband networks:

- What are the major single points of failure in broadband architectures?
- What measures do communications providers already take to minimize the potential for single points of failure?
- What provisions are made by communications providers to ensure the survivability of cell sites relied on by first responders?
- What are the most effective and widely deployed physical security best practices?
- Should traffic to and from critical emergency response agencies and for critical services be prioritized on the networks during emergencies?
- What steps have been taken to ensure redundancy and diversity of physical network links to hardware?

- Is the capacity of residential access networks sufficient to handle sudden surges or overloads in traffic during, for example, a pandemic emergency?
- What network management practices are in place to handle overloads during emergencies?

The FCC looks forward to reviewing the record and exploring how best to further improve and secure America's broadband infrastructure into the future. The deadline for comments on the issues presented by the NOI will be 45 days and reply comments 75 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Action by the Commission, April 21, 2010, by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 10-62). Chairman Genachowski, and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and Baker. Separate Statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and Baker. PS Docket No. 10-92.

Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB) contact is Jeff Goldthorp, Chief of the Communications Systems Analysis Division, at (202) 418-1096.

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