



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS ON NETWORK CAPACITY FOR NATIONWIDE MOBILE PUBLIC SAFETY BROADBAND NETWORK

Washington, D.C. -- The Federal Communications Commission today released a comprehensive white paper which provides the capacity analysis behind the National Broadband Plan recommendations for the deployment and operation of a nationwide 4G wireless public safety network that allows first responders to seamlessly communicate across geographies and agencies, regardless of devices.

The white paper, titled: “The Public Safety Nationwide Interoperable Broadband Network, A New Model For Capacity, Performance and Cost”, shows that the 10 MHz of dedicated spectrum currently allocated to public safety will provide the capacity and performance necessary for day-to-day communications and serious emergency situations. One study cited in the white paper shows that 10 MHz of spectrum can yield the same capacity as over 160 MHz if the correct technology, architecture, and devices are used. As part of this analysis, the FCC examined two real life events, the Minneapolis Bridge Collapse and Hurricane Ike hitting Houston, and additional empirical data which supports this conclusion.

“Our goal is to bring true interoperable mobile broadband communications to America’s first responders,” said Jamie Barnett, Chief of the FCC’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB). “The FCC study shows how we can maximize capacity, performance, reliability and resiliency of public safety broadband communications even in the most extraordinary emergencies when life-saving response efforts are underway and communications demands are at their peak.”

For the worst emergencies, the FCC has devised an innovative concept of priority access and roaming across the commercial broadband wireless spectrum that will make at least 50 or 60 MHz of additional spectrum immediately available to public safety. The white paper describes how 10, 20 or even 30 MHz of additional dedicated spectrum may not be sufficient to support public safety broadband communications in a major emergency, and how the priority access and roaming exceeds the public safety spectrum that would otherwise be available. Moreover, it provides public safety with dependability and back up support, which does not exist with a purely dedicated network.

Barnett noted, “The key is capacity. Spectrum is only one factor. This plan provides extraordinary capacity to public safety, first with a dedicated network, backed with first-in-line privileges for public safety. This plan is like providing public safety with its own expandable, high speed lane, and it is a cost-effective investment in a national asset. Merely allocating an additional 10 MHz to public safety would be like building a separate, stand-alone highway system, and one so expensive that it would not even reach every community in America for years.”

The FCC's study supports the following National Broadband Plan recommendations:

- Utilizing new 4G commercial technologies;
- Utilizing an incentive-based partnership approach between public safety and commercial industry;
- Constructing a public safety 'overlay' network on approximately 41,600 existing commercial cell sites, thus driving the highest cost efficiencies;
- Deploying and upgrading approximately 3,000 additional public safety cell sites in rural regions of the country;
- Distributing antenna systems and pico cells inside buildings to improve coverage and offload traffic from external cell towers;
- Developing a fleet of public safety mobile assets, including cell towers on wheels;
- Allowing public safety priority access and roaming on commercial networks in at least the 700 MHz band, providing public safety with access to at least an additional 60 MHz of spectrum during large-scale emergencies when more network capacity is needed; and
- Supplementing public safety's video application requirements by using wireline video feeds and video transmission capabilities in fixed wireless spectrum bands to increase the ability of the public safety broadband network to meet these demands and free up 700 MHz for mobile broadband communications.

For more information on the FCC's white paper study, please contact Jennifer A. Manner, Deputy Bureau Chief of PSHSB at 202-418-3619 or via email: jennifer.manner@fcc.gov. To read or obtain a copy of the white paper study, please visit the FCC's home page at www.fcc.gov.

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