



NEWS

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

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION PROPOSES PLAN TO IMPROVE SPECTRUM EFFICIENCY AND PROMOTE USE OF 4.9 GHZ BAND FOR BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIALS

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today proposed rules and asked for comment on a number of issues involved in improving spectrum efficiency and encouraging greater use of the 4940-4990 MHz (4.9 GHz) band for public safety broadband communications. Improved use of the 4.9 GHz band will facilitate wireless local area networks for incident scene management, fixed point-point surveillance, and support for dispatch operations and vehicular or personal communications.

The 4.9 GHz broadband spectrum is a contiguous block of 50 megahertz of spectrum that is designated for both fixed and mobile and dedicated for public safety. Using 4.9 GHz spectrum, public safety users can set up temporary mesh networks that support data, voice, and video communications at scenes of emergencies; monitor sensitive locations remotely with point-to-point video links; and set up city-wide Wi-Fi networks to give first responders dedicated broadband access. The 4.9 GHz spectrum holds great potential to complement the national public safety broadband network for backhaul; facilitate safer operation of our nation's critical infrastructure and utilities; and provide wireless broadband connectivity in remote or sparsely populated locations.

Specifically, in the *Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, the Commission seeks comment on:

- Whether to establish formal coordination requirements in the 4.9 GHz band, whether the 700 MHz Regional Planning Committees (RPCs) could administer a database registration process, and options for a registration database to be used for coordination purposes;
- Whether expanding eligibility to critical infrastructure entities and commercial users would promote more effective and efficient use of the band;
- Whether eligibility for commercial users should be on a secondary basis subject to a shutdown feature to allow public safety priority access;
- Whether the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) is or should be eligible for a 4.9 GHz band license, particularly for backhaul links in support of the 700 MHz network; technical proposals to increase spectrum efficiency, usage, and throughput in the band. Specifically, the Commission invited input on issues such as the channel plan, power and antenna gain limits, aeronautical mobile operations, and interoperability standards.

The Commission tentatively concludes that allowing non-public safety entities to obtain licenses directly rather than having to enter into sharing arrangements with public safety licensees would remove a barrier to entry and stimulate more investment in the band. The Commission also addresses how the 4.9 GHz band can complement the nationwide 700 MHz public safety broadband network to be deployed by FirstNet under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 and asked for comment on whether the 4.9 GHz band could support the 700 MHz network through the offloading of fixed video and/or backhaul applications.

The *Fourth Report and Order* portion of the Commission's action corrects minor errors, including reinstating an exemption of 4.9 GHz band applications from certified frequency coordination requirements; correcting and clarifying the 4.9 GHz band plan; and making three "clean-up" amendments to the [Public Safety Pool Frequency Table](#).

Action by the Commission June 13, 2012, by *Fourth Report and Order and Fifth Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (FCC 12-61). Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai.

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