



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:
October 29, 2013

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Janice Wise: (202) 418-8165
Janice.Wise@fcc.gov

FCC ADOPTS NEW RULES TO MAKE VIDEO DEVICES ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Order Represents Final Milestone in FCC's Implementation of Landmark Law Making Digital Communications More Accessible

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today adopted rules that will enable people who are blind or visually impaired to have easier access to digital video programming on a wide range of electronic devices. The rules will also enable consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing to activate closed captioning on their devices with greater ease.

This action represents the final major step in the FCC's implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA), enacted in 2010 to bring people with disabilities access to the modern and innovative communications technologies of the twenty-first century. The CVAA is the most significant accessibility legislation since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result of the FCC's implementation of the CVAA, more than 50 million Americans will have greater access to advanced communications.

Devices covered under the rules adopted today include navigation devices – devices used to access cable or satellite services, such as set-top boxes and TiVos – as well as other devices used to receive or play back digital video, ranging from televisions and computers to tablets and smartphones. All covered devices are required to provide on-screen text menus and guides that are audibly accessible, as well as a mechanism that is comparable to a button, key or icon for activating certain accessibility features, such as closed captioning. Devices other than navigation devices are also required to make their other built-in functions accessible.

The Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking implements Sections 204 and 205 of the CVAA. Its provisions include flexibility for small entities through extended compliance deadlines, outreach requirements to inform the public about the availability of accessibility options, and a procedure for complaints. The Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on a number of areas where the current record is insufficient.

The CVAA has helped ensure that people with disabilities are not left out of the digital revolution by requiring design features that improve accessibility in telephones and television, as well as on the Internet and in new devices, applications, and services. The FCC has played a key

role in implementing the Act through initiatives that have already provided enormous benefits to consumers, including the following:

- More than 50 million Americans with disabilities have greater access to advanced communications services, such as text messaging, e-mail, and distant messaging and the equipment used with these services, such as smartphones, personal computers, laptops, and tablets.
- 36 million Americans who are deaf or have hearing loss can watch television programs with closed captions when those programs are re-shown over the Internet, and soon they will be able to use their cell phones, tablets and other portable wireless devices to watch these programs with captions.
- 25 million Americans who are blind or visually impaired can enjoy TV programs with video description and send an email or instant message on a smart phone.
- Thousands of people who are deaf-blind can receive accessible communication devices so they can make telephone calls and access the Internet, to work, learn, and shop, like everyone else.
- Americans with disabilities are able to locate accessible communication products and services through the Commission's new accessibility clearinghouse at <http://apps.fcc.gov/accessibilityclearinghouse/>.
- And, as a result of today's actions, 25 million Americans who are blind or visually impaired will be able to navigate menus on a range of devices that show video programming, with access to captioning facilitated for an additional 36 million Americans.

Action by the Commission October 29, 2013, by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 13-138). Acting Chairwoman Clyburn and Commissioner Rosenworcel with Commissioner Pai approving in part, concurring in part. Acting Chairwoman Clyburn, Commissioners Rosenworcel and Pai issuing statements.

For additional information, contact Adam Copeland at (202) 418-1037 or Adam.Copeland@fcc.gov or Maria Mullarkey at (202) 418-1067 or Maria.Mullarkey@fcc.gov.

–FCC–

News and other information about the FCC is available at www.fcc.gov