

SPECIAL ACCESS DATA COLLECTION
Frequently Asked Questions
As of October 1, 2014

As used below, all capitalized and italicized terms (e.g., *Purchaser*, *Provider*, etc.) are defined terms used for purposes of the data collection. For definitions of these terms, please refer to the [Special Access Data Collection – Glossary of Terms](#).

GENERAL

1. What is special access?

Special access services, or *Dedicated Services*, transport voice and data over a dedicated transmission line between two or more designated points at a rate of at least 1.5 megabytes per second (Mbps) upstream and downstream. Special access service encompasses *Circuit-Based Dedicated Services (CBDSSs)* such as *DS1s* and *DS3s* and *Packet-Based Dedicated Services (PBDS)* such as Ethernet. For example, wireless providers use high capacity special access lines to send voice and data from cell towers to their mobile switching center where the call is then switched to the sender's intended recipient. Individual consumers, small businesses, government offices, hospitals, medical offices, schools, libraries, ATMs and credit card readers use special access to either connect to a dedicated network or to an Internet service provider for the completion of the transmission via the Internet.

2. What is the purpose of the special access data collection?

The FCC is collecting data for an analysis of the broader special access market. The analysis will help the FCC revise its regulations of the special access services provided by larger traditional phone companies—the “price cap” *Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs)* such as AT&T, Verizon, Qwest, etc.—to target regulatory relief where there is sufficient competition to ensure just and reasonable rates, terms, and conditions. For more information, see the FCC's [Special Access Data Collection Overview](#) webpage.

3. What is the Commission going to do with the data collected?

The Commission is collecting the data for a comprehensive market analysis that will look at the number special access providers, facilities, service offerings, revenues, and expenditures nationwide in all price cap areas. The Commission's review is not limited to the legacy TDM-based services such as *DS1s* and *DS3s* provided by larger traditional phone companies (ILECs) but also includes the packet-based service offerings of both phone companies and their competitors such as Ethernet. For more information about the proposed analysis, see Dec. 2012 FNPRM.

4. Who must respond to the collection?

Providers and *Purchasers* of *Dedicated Services* and certain entities providing *Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Service* in study areas where the *Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC)* is subject to price cap regulation must respond to the collection unless specifically excluded. The collection captures data from *ILECs*, competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs), interexchange carriers (IXCs), cable system operators, wireless providers, or any other entity subject to the FCC's jurisdiction that is not otherwise exempted that either provides a dedicated service or a connection over which a *Dedicated Service* could be provided as well as *End User*, i.e. business, institutional or government entities, that purchase *Dedicated Services* including wireless service providers.

5. How can I determine if I operate in a study area where the *ILEC* is subject to price cap regulation?

A [map](#) depicting the study areas where the *ILECs* are subject to price cap and rate-of-return regulation is available on the Commission's website; the map will assist entities in determining whether or not you are providing or purchasing services in price cap areas. You are only required to report information and data pertaining to those study areas where the *ILEC* is subject to price cap regulation, not rate-of-return areas. That said, entities can report information across their territories, including the rate-of-return areas, if they find it easier to do so.

6. Am I required to respond if I operate in areas where the *Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC)* is subject to rate of return regulation?

No. You are only required to respond to the data collection in study areas where the *ILEC* is subject to price cap regulation, not rate-of-return regulation. To determine if you operate in a price cap or rate of return study area, consult the following [map](#) maintained by the Commission.

7. Am I required to respond if the *ILEC* that operated in my service area converted from rate-of-return to price cap regulation in 2013?

Yes. The collection covers *Dedicated Service* provided or purchased and *Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Service* provided if the *ILEC* was subject to price cap regulation in the area at any point during the relevant reporting period, 2013.

8. Is there a glossary of terms used in the collection?

Definitions are available in the Definitions section of the Data Collection [Questions](#) or the Commission maintains a [Glossary](#) page for the data collection.

9. What is the filing deadline for the collection?

December 15, 2014

10. What are the penalties for not filing in response to this data collection?

Failure to comply with these data reporting requirements may subject parties to monetary forfeitures of up to \$160,000 for each violation or each day of a continuing violation, up to a maximum of \$1,575,000 for any single act or failure to act that is a continuing violation.

11. Is there a filing fee?

No.

12. Does the data collection affect my Form 477 filing?

No.

13. Do I need to amend my Form 477 filing because of the special access data collection?

No.

14. How do I know where the Commission has granted Phase I or Phase II Pricing Flexibility?

A complete list of where the Commission has granted either *Phase I* or *Phase II* pricing flexibility for *Channel Terminations* can be found in Appendix D to the Commission's [Pricing Flexibility Suspension Order](#).

15. Who is required to respond to the collection when a change in control occurred during the reporting year 2013?

If at any point during the 2013 reporting period, the entity in question provided services covered by the scope of this collection or purchased Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Service, then the current owner is required to respond.

II. EXEMPTIONS FROM RESPONDING TO DATA COLLECTION

1. I am a small business *Purchaser*. Am I required to respond?

Purchasers that purchased less than \$5 million in *Dedicated Services* in 2013 in areas where the ILEC is subject to price cap regulation are specifically excluded from the collection. However, if you were required to file FCC Form 477 to report the provision of broadband connections to end user locations for year 2013 then you must file a certification using the Streamlined Certification Process using the FCC's secure website portal, <https://specialaccessfiling.fcc.gov/spadc/login>. For more information, see [Data Collection Questions – Pages 4, 28; System Guide](#).

2. Am I exempted as a holding company if in the aggregate my *Affiliated Companies* exceed the \$5 million threshold exempting *Purchasers* from the collection?

Purchasers that purchased less than \$5 million in *Dedicated Services* in 2013 in areas where the ILEC is subject to price cap regulation are specifically excluded from the collection unless they filed FCC Form 477 in 2013 in which case they can so certify. Further, parties can either submit a single response reporting aggregate information at the ultimate parent/holding company level for all subsidiaries, affiliates, and intermediate holding companies or submit separate responses for individual subsidiaries, affiliates, and intermediate holding companies. For additional information, see the data collection [Instructions – Pages 7-8](#).

3. I am a small *Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Service* provider. Am I required to respond?

Entities providing *Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Service* to fewer than 15,000 customers and fewer than 1,500 business broadband customers as of December 18, 2012 are not required to respond to the questions directed at such entities. However, you may be required to provide data in response to questions if you are a *Provider* or *Purchaser* of *Dedicated Services*. For more information, see [Data Collection Questions – Page 1](#).

4. I am a business, school, or local government entity that provides an information service. Am I required to respond if I provide an information service?

End Users (businesses, schools, local government entities) that provide an information service (such as Internet access service) are excluded from the questions directed at *Purchasers*. However, you may be required to provide data in response to questions if you are a *Provider* or entity providing *Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Service* to 15,000 or more customers or 1,500 or more business broadband customers in price cap areas. Even if you do not fall in any of these categories, you may have an obligation to simply file a certification with the FCC saying as much if you were required to file the FCC Form 477 to report broadband connections to end user locations for 2013. For additional information, see the Bureau's September 2013 [Data Collection Implementation Order](#) and the data collection [Instructions – Pages 3-4](#).

II. SPECIAL ACCESS WEB PORTAL

LOG IN PAGE

1. How do I submit responses to the collection?

Submit responses to the collection, including narrative responses and database containers, and streamlined certifications through the [Special Access Web Portal](#).

2. What is an FRN?

FRN stands for FCC Registration Number. In order to conduct business with the FCC, you must first register through the [Commission Registration System \(CORES\)](#) as a business or individual. Upon registration, you will be assigned a 10-digit FRN, which will be used to uniquely identify you in transactions with the FCC.

3. What's the format for entering the FRN?

Enter the FRN with no dashes or spaces, and be sure to enter any leading zeroes.

4. I don't know my FRN password.

Click the [Forgot Your Password?](#) link on the Log In page. This will allow you to reset your password online if you know the answer to your previously-provided a Personal Security Question. If you do not have this information, contact FCC Technical Support at 1-877-480-3201 and select option #1 from the menu for password reset assistance (Mon-Fri 8:00am-6:00pm ET).

5. I have multiple FRNs. Which FRN should I log in with?

Parties can either submit a single response reporting aggregate information at the ultimate parent/holding company level for all subsidiaries, affiliates, and intermediate holding companies or submit separate responses for individual subsidiaries, affiliates, and intermediate holding companies. For further information, see the data collection [Instructions – Pages 7-8](#).

GETTING STARTED PAGE

1. What is the Database Container Download?

The database container is a file for submitting data that will include validation scripts to verify that the filer is providing the data in the appropriate format. It is currently unavailable pending further testing. Once available, we will announce on the [Special Access Data Collection Overview](#) page.

2. When will the Database Container be available for Download?

The database container parties will download from the web portal to load and deliver certain data in response to the collection, e.g., location and pricing data, is undergoing final testing and is not yet available. Accordingly, the Bureau has deactivated certain functionality on the web portal that respondents will use to electronically upload the database container pending completion of the database container. This feature will become available in the near future, in Version 2.0, once testing is successfully completed.

3. Can I submit data without using the Database Container?

Only for .zip files that are larger than 2 GB. Respondents can make arrangements with FCC staff to deliver files larger than 2 GB using a portable electronic storage medium.

4. Can I submit my Essay Uploads without submitting my Database Container and Log File?

You can upload responses to the narrative questions on the Essay Uploads page but you will be unable to successfully complete the submission process for the Full Website filing option until the Database Container is made available.

5. Do I qualify for the Streamlined Certification Process?

You only qualify for the Streamlined Certification Process if you were required to file the Form 477 "Local Telephone Competition and Broadband Reporting," on March 1, 2013, to report broadband connections to end users as of December 31, 2012 and are not a *Provider, Purchaser*, or entity providing *Best Efforts Business Broadband Internet Access Services* to 15,000 or more customers or 1,500 or more business broadband customers in price cap areas.

FILER IDENTIFICATION

1. Who is a "Purchaser – Other"?

Refers to Purchasers that are not mobile wireless service providers. For more information, see [Data Collection Questions 11.F.1-14](#) and [Instructions – Pages 64-71](#).

ESSAY UPLOADS

1. Is there a file size limit for Essay Uploads?

Yes. The file size limit is 2 GB.

2. How can I submit files that exceed 2 GB?

Respondents can make arrangements with FCC staff to deliver files larger than 2 GB using a portable electronic storage medium.

3. My essay responses do not contain Highly Confidential Information so what am I supposed to upload in the "Highly Confidential" field?

Upload the same Confidential filing in the "Highly Confidential" field.

4. What types of files will the essay upload accept?

There are no formatting restrictions on uploads responding to the Essay Questions. The essay upload will accept Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Adobe PDFs, text, etc.

DATABASE UPLOAD

1. What types of files will the database upload accept?

The database container will only accept a .zip file format that does not exceed 2 Gigabytes (GB).

2. Is there a file size limit for Essay Uploads?

Yes. 2 GB.

3. How can I submit files that exceed 2 GB?

Respondents can make arrangements with FCC staff to deliver files larger than 2 GB using a portable electronic storage medium.

4. What is a Log File?

A file that provides a system check to ensure that your FCC Registration Number (FRN) matches the database container and that your database container is properly received by the FCC.

5. Why can't I upload my Log File and Database Container?

The database container parties will download from the web portal to load and deliver certain data in response to the collection, e.g., location and pricing data, is undergoing final testing and is not yet available. Accordingly, the Bureau has deactivated certain functionality on the web portal that respondents will use to electronically upload the database container pending completion of the database container. This feature will become available in the near future, in Version 2.0, once testing is successfully completed.

CERTIFICATION

1. May a single Certification Statement cover multiple entities?

Yes.

SUBMISSION

1. Can I print my complete submission package?

No.

2. Can I print the certification page as proof of filing?

Yes.

3. When will I be able to submit responses to the Full Website.

You will not be able to submit your responses until the Database Container is uploaded to the Full Website under the "Getting Started" webpage. The database container parties will download from the web portal to load and deliver certain data in response to the collection, e.g., location and pricing data, is undergoing final testing and is not yet available. Accordingly, the Bureau has deactivated certain functionality on the web portal that respondents will use to electronically upload the database container pending completion of the database container. This feature will become available in the near future, in Version 2.0, once testing is successfully completed.

4. How do I change the filer type once I submit my responses to the Full Website?

You will need to contact FCC staff to reset the system to enable you to resubmit your submission in its entirety.