

DISTRIBUTION, SALE AND USE OF WIRELESS MICROPHONES OPERATING IN THE 700 MHz BAND PROHIBITED

FCC Consumer Facts

All operations of wireless microphones (and certain other devices certified as “low power auxiliary stations”) **operating in frequencies between 698 and 806 MHz (the 700 MHz Band) must cease no later than June 12, 2010** – one year after completion of the digital television (DTV) transition – to prevent harmful interference to new public safety and wireless broadband services provided in the 700 MHz Band. Wireless microphone operations *outside* of the 700 MHz Band are not affected by this action, and may continue.

All users of 700 MHz Band wireless microphones (and similar devices) – including theaters, churches, schools, conference centers, theme parks, and musicians -- will need to retune (where possible) or replace their wireless microphone equipment with other microphone devices no later than June 12, 2010.

Background

To ensure that the new public safety and wireless broadband services can operate effectively, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has prohibited, effective January 15, 2010, the import, sale, offer for sale, or shipment of wireless microphones (and other low power auxiliary stations) intended for use in the 700 MHz Band in the United States. The FCC has also adopted a number of consumer safeguards for the users of wireless microphones, which inform consumers of their rights and obligations in operating wireless microphones. Finally, the FCC is engaging in a consumer outreach campaign to help wireless microphone users identify whether they may have a 700 MHz Band wireless microphone and inform users how the FCC's rules will affect them.

All 700 MHz Wireless Microphone Operations Must Cease No Later than June 12, 2010

All users of wireless microphones – including both licensed users (under Part 74) and unlicensed users – must cease operations in the 700 MHz Band no later than June 12, 2010, consistent with the FCC's long-standing goal of making this spectrum fully available for use by public safety and commercial licensees, and the customers that they serve. Wireless microphones and other devices, however, may continue to operate in the core TV bands, as discussed more fully below.

Some Operations May Need To Cease Earlier

If a public safety or commercial licensee has initiated, or will be initiating, operations in the 700 MHz Band in particular markets prior to June 12, 2010, users of wireless microphones and low power auxiliary stations in those markets will be required to cease operations early, subject to the following early clearing process.



Early Clearing Process

Between now and June 12, 2010, a 700 MHz commercial or public safety licensee may notify the FCC that it will be initiating operations, including system testing or trials, on specified frequencies in particular market(s). Upon such notification, the FCC will issue a public notice that will be available on the FCC's website www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/ that identifies the affected market area(s). Users of wireless microphones and low power auxiliary stations in those areas must cease operation within 60 days of the release of the notice.

In addition, between now and June 12, 2010, any 700 MHz commercial or public safety licensee may, at its option, notify any entity operating wireless microphones or low power auxiliary stations of its intention to initiate operations on specified frequencies in the market in which the wireless microphone or low power auxiliary station user is operating.

Upon receipt of such notice, the wireless microphone or low power auxiliary station user in the affected market area must cease operation within 60 days.

Commercial or public safety licensees that have already initiated operations in the 700 MHz Band may, effective January 15, 2010, follow the same notifications procedures, triggering the same 60-day cessation obligation for users of wireless microphones or low power auxiliary stations.

In the event that both of these notice provisions are used to provide notice to a particular user of a low power auxiliary station(s), the user will be required to cease operations in the market(s) in accordance with whichever notice provides for earlier termination of such operations.

Any Wireless Microphone Causing Interference In The 700 MHz Band Must Cease Operations Immediately

Notwithstanding any of the early clearing mechanisms discussed here, wireless microphone and low power auxiliary station users that cause harmful interference to a 700 MHz commercial or public safety licensee must cease operations immediately, consistent with the FCC's rules for secondary use. The FCC is in continuous communication with the public safety community to ascertain the extent of public safety use of the 700 MHz Band to help ensure that public safety agencies are able to operate free from harmful interference.

Manufacture, Distribution and Sale of 700 MHz Wireless Microphones Prohibited

The FCC has prohibited, effective January 15, 2010, the import, sale, offer for sale, or shipment of wireless microphones and other low power auxiliary stations intended for use in the 700 MHz Band in the United States. This prohibition will help complete an important component of the DTV transition by clearing the 700 MHz band to enable the rollout of new communications services for public safety and for next generation wireless services for consumers.



Unlicensed & Licensed Operation of Wireless Microphones

Wireless microphones – both within the 700 MHz Band and in other frequency bands – are operated by unlicensed users (under Part 15) and by licensed users (under Part 74). Users of wireless microphones operating in the 700 MHz band – whether unlicensed or licensed – must cease operations of all 700 MHz Band wireless microphones no later than June 12, 2010.

Unlicensed Operations All users of wireless microphones may operate the equipment on an unlicensed basis, subject to certain restrictions: the device (1), may not cause harmful interference (2) must not be operated at a power level in excess of 50 milliwatts, and (3) must be operated in a way that accepts any interference that may be received. For most users – such as theaters, churches, schools, conference centers, theme parks, and musicians – the use of this device is unlicensed.

Most wireless microphones are designed to operate with 50 milliwatts or less. Users are advised to consult their owner's manual, or other materials provided by the manufacturer or distributor, to determine the output power of their wireless microphone.

Licensed Operations Some users are eligible to obtain a license to operate these devices. These include specified entities – such as licensees of AM, FM, or TV stations, broadcast networks, and cable television system operators – set forth in the FCC's rules (pursuant to Part 74). These entities, which can operate with fewer restrictions (e.g., higher power levels, with interference protections), must first obtain a license before operating under the rules permitted for licensed use.

Pending Rulemaking The FCC has a pending rulemaking for wireless microphones and other low power auxiliary stations, therefore the conditions under which purchasers are allowed to use such devices in the core TV bands may change when the Commission adopts final rules. To participate in the rulemaking proceeding, go to www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/.

Informing Consumers Whether They Have a 700 MHz Wireless Microphone

The FCC is working with organizations whose memberships include wireless microphone users and these groups are helping to inform all affected users. In addition, the FCC's website provides information about which wireless microphones currently operate in the 700 MHz band at www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/. Consumers may look up equipment by manufacturer. The website also includes information about how to contact manufacturers for more detailed information about wireless microphone equipment. Contact information for the equipment manufacturers is at www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones/manufacturers.html.

Some wireless microphones are marked with the frequency the device uses. If information on the device indicates that it operates on frequencies between 698 and 806 MHz, then the device uses 700 MHz spectrum and may not be used after June 12, 2010.

In addition, consumers may contact the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY where staff will be assisting consumers in determining whether their equipment is affected.



For more information about the use of Wireless Microphones you may contact the FCC at:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322)

TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)

Fax: (202) 418-0232

E-mail: fccinfo@fcc.gov

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To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts.

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