



NEWS

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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).

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FCC ACTS TO ENHANCE CONSUMERS' ABILITY TO FILL MOBILE BROADBAND COVERAGE GAPS

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted a Report and Order that furthers the goal of improving our nation's wireless infrastructure by expanding the reach of wireless coverage for consumers. These new rules governing signal boosters – which amplify signals between wireless devices and wireless networks – will substantially improve signal booster design by requiring manufacturers to include safeguards that protect wireless networks. As a result, all four nationwide carriers, as well as many rural and regional carriers, have consented to the use of boosters on their networks, as long as those boosters meet the technical specifications outlined in the Order.

Removing consumer and industry uncertainty regarding signal booster use and operation will promote further investment in and use of this promising technology. Signal boosters not only help consumers improve coverage where signal strength is weak, but they also aid public safety first responders by extending wireless access in hard-to-serve areas such as tunnels, subways, and garages. This Report and Order reflects a common sense, consensus-based technical solution that will help millions of consumers across the country.

The Order addresses two classes of signal boosters – consumer and industrial – with distinct regulatory requirements for each. Specifically, consumer signal boosters must meet stringent technical specifications (Network Protection Standard), and are authorized under provider licenses subject to provider consent, voluntarily provided in this case by most carriers. Consumers must register their signal booster with their provider prior to use. Labeling requirements ensure that consumers understand these terms of use. Consumer boosters can be used on most mainstream wireless bands: cellular, PCS, AWS-1, 700 MHz, and ESMR (after rebanding). The use of consumer boosters may not cause interference to wireless networks even if a device meets the Network Protection Standard.

The Order also details rules for industrial signal boosters designed to cover large areas such as stadiums, airports, and tunnels. Industrial signal boosters will continue to fall under the existing authorization process, and must be installed and operated in coordination with licensees.

The new rules for boosters are supported by a diverse range of wireless providers, represented by CTIA-The Wireless Association, the Rural Telecommunications Group (RTG), and the Competitive Carriers Association (CCA).

Additional information about this proceeding can be found on the FCC website at:
www.fcc.gov/signal-boosters

Action by the Commission February 20, 2013, by Report and Order (FCC 13-21). Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners McDowell, Clyburn, Rosenworcel and Pai.

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