



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 ENFORCES HEARING AID COMPATIBILITY RULES TO BENEFIT CONSUMERS WITH HEARING DISABILITIES

Wireless Carriers Make Voluntary Payments Exceeding \$500,000 and Agree to Robust Compliance Plans

Washington, D.C. – Today, the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau settled two wireless hearing aid compatibility investigations involving Airadigm Communications, Inc. dba Airfire Mobile, and TeleGuam Holdings, LLC, successor-in-interest to Pulse Mobile, LLC. The settlements include voluntary payments of more than one-half million dollars as well as conditions designed to ensure future compliance. The hearing aid compatibility rules ensure that individuals with hearing loss can fully access advanced wireless phone service without excessive feedback or noise. The settlements will directly aid consumers in rural communities and in the U.S. territory of Guam, where the two companies do business.

“I am pleased by our continued vigilance on behalf of the disability community to secure compliance with these critical rules,” noted Acting FCC Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn. “Wireless technology is transforming the very fabric of our lives. We must continue to ensure that all Americans – regardless of their hearing disability or where they live – can enjoy the benefits these technologies have to offer.”

Acting FCC Enforcement Bureau Chief Robert H. Ratcliffe added, “The hearing aid compatibility rules have a real impact on real people. We urge carriers both large and small to review their wireless handset offerings and FCC filings to ensure that they are in compliance.”

Consistent with previous FCC actions in this area, the consent decrees require the companies to implement robust compliance plans that include new operating procedures, comprehensive training of employees and agents, and periodic reporting requirements. The companies will also make sizeable voluntary contributions to the U.S. Treasury (\$260,000 from Airadigm and \$280,000 from TeleGuam Holdings).

To facilitate the Commission’s goal of unfettered access to advanced services by persons with disabilities, the Commission’s hearing aid compatibility rules, among other things, specify technical standards that digital wireless handsets must meet to ensure compatibility with hearing aids operating in certain modes. The rules also establish deadlines by which regulatees are required to offer specified numbers or percentages of hearing aid-compatible digital wireless handsets and to report their progress to the Commission. Since 2011, the Commission has taken hearing aid compatibility enforcement actions valued at more than \$2.9 million.

The consent decrees are available at <http://www.fcc.gov/enforcement-bureau>.

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