

Closed Captioning of Internet Video Programming

Closed captioning is the visual display of the audio portion of video programming. Captioning provides access to individuals who are deaf or have hearing loss and is often used in places where it is difficult to hear a TV program, such as restaurants and exercise facilities. FCC rules require captioned programs shown on TV to be captioned when re-shown on the Internet.

Video programming rules

- The Internet closed captioning rules only apply if the video programming was shown on TV in the U.S. with captions.
- "Full-length video programming" is video programming that is shown on TV and is distributed to end users, substantially in its entirety, through the Internet.
- "Video clips" are excerpts of full-length video programming that are posted online. The rules require video programming distributors that show programming on TV to post captioned clips of their programming on their own websites or applications ("apps"). At this time, the video clips rules do not apply to third party websites or apps.
- Consumer-generated media (e.g., home videos) shown on the Internet are not required to be captioned, unless they were shown on TV with captions.
- Movies shown on the Internet are not required to be captioned unless they have been previously shown on TV with captions.

Implementation schedule for captioning internet video programming

The following deadlines apply to video programming that is not in a distributor's Internet online library before it is shown on TV with captions.

Full-length internet video programming

Full-length Internet video programming must be captioned if the programming is shown on TV in the U.S. with captions on or after the following dates:

- September 30, 2012, for prerecorded programming that is not "edited for Internet distribution." "Edited for Internet distribution" means the TV version has been substantially edited. Examples of substantial edits are deleting scenes or altering musical scores. Changing the number or duration of commercials is not considered substantial editing.
- March 30, 2013, for live and near-live programming.
 - "Live programming" is defined as programming that is shown on TV substantially simultaneously with its performance.
 - "Near-live programming" is defined as programming that is performed and recorded less than 24 hours before it was first shown on TV.
- September 30, 2013, for prerecorded programming that is substantially edited for Internet distribution.

Internet video clips

Internet video clips must be captioned if the associated programming is shown on TV in the U.S. with captions on or after the following dates:

- January 1, 2016, where the video clip contains a single excerpt of a captioned TV program with the same video and audio that was shown on TV ("straight lift" clips).

- January 1, 2017, where a single file contains multiple straight lift video clips ("montages").
- July 1, 2017, for video clips of live and near-live TV programming (such as news or sporting events).
 - For clips of live programming, up to a 12-hour delay is permitted in posting a captioned clip after the programming has been shown on TV.
 - For clips of near-live programming, up to an 8-hour delay is permitted in posting a captioned clip after the programming has been shown on TV.

Archival internet video programming

The following deadlines apply to video programming that a distributor already shows on the Internet. Distributors have extra time to add captions to video programming that they already show on the Internet and that is later shown on TV with captions, as follows:

- Within 45 days after the date it is shown on TV with captions on or after March 30, 2014 and before March 30, 2015;
- Within 30 days after the date it is shown on TV with captions on or after March 30, 2015 and before March 30, 2016; and
- Within 15 days after the date it is shown on TV with captions on or after March 30, 2016.

Filing a complaint

If you experience a captioning problem after the implementation dates, you may file a written complaint with either the FCC or the video programming distributor or provider. If you choose to file your written complaint with the video programming distributor or provider, you may be able to find the contact information on the distributor's or provider's website. If you file your complaint with the FCC, the FCC will forward the complaint to the video programming distributor or provider.

Your written complaint must be filed within 60 days of the captioning problem. After receiving a complaint, either directly from you or from the FCC, the video programming distributor or provider will have 30 days to respond to the complaint. If you chose to first file your complaint with the video programming distributor or provider and it does not respond within 30 days, or if a dispute remains, you can still send your complaint to the FCC.

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online: <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322); Videophone for ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission
 Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
 Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
 445 12th Street, S.W.
 Washington, DC 20554

What to include in your complaint

Your complaint should include the following information:

- The name and postal address, website, or email address of the video programming distributor, provider and/or owner
- The video program or show with the captioning problem, including the name of the program or show
- The device and/or software used to view the program or show
- The date and time when you experienced the captioning problem



- A detailed description of the captioning problem, including specifics about the frequency and type of problem (e.g., captions cut off, captions missing)
- Any additional information that may assist in processing your complaint
- Resolution of your complaint may be delayed if the information above is incomplete.

You can also provide the FCC with any additional information you think appropriate (e.g., screen shots of the web page, written-out examples of garbled captions, video recordings you made of the captioning problem, etc.).

For more information

For more information about FCC programs to promote access to telecommunications services for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office website at www.fcc.gov/general/disability-rights-office.

Accessible formats

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

Last Reviewed 6/9/16

