

Background

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created the Low-Power Television (LPTV) service in 1982 to provide opportunities for locally-oriented television service in small communities. These communities may be in rural areas or individual communities within larger urban areas. LPTV service offers a less expensive and more flexible way of delivering programming tailored to the interests of viewers in small localized areas than traditional full-service/power TV stations. It has created opportunities for new entry into television broadcasting, provided a means of local self-expression, and permitted fuller use of the broadcast spectrum. LPTV stations are currently undertaking their transition to digital operations in conjunction with the Commission's overall digital television transition.

LPTV Digital Transition

Although Congress established a hard deadline of June 12, 2009 for full power stations to cease analog operations and begin operating only in digital, the statutory deadline did not apply to low power television stations, TV translator and Class A television stations (referred to herein as "low power television stations"). Therefore, while all full power television stations have ceased over-the-air analog broadcasting, many low power television stations are continuing to transmit analog signals.

The FCC has established **September 1, 2015** date for the termination of all analog low power television service. After that date, analog television will no longer exist in the United States. Until that time, low power television stations may continue to operate their analog facilities.

Low power television stations have the opportunity to seek either an on-channel digital conversion of their existing analog facilities ("flash cut") or may construct and operate a second digital companion channel during the remainder of the digital transition. However all low power television stations will be required to decide a single digital channel to continue to operate after the **September 1, 2015** transition date.

Ancillary and Supplementary Services

Licensed digital LPTV stations and permittees operating pursuant to Special Temporary Authority (STA) must submit an [FCC Form 317 \(www.fcc.gov/forms\)](#) - (Annual DTV Ancillary and Supplementary Services Report) by December 1st of each year. Stations must report whether they have provided ancillary and supplementary services at any time during the twelve-month period ending on the preceding September 30th. If they have, they are required to remit to the Commission an amount equal to 5% of the gross revenues derived from these services.

LPTV Station Operation

LPTV stations are operated by diverse groups and organizations - high schools and colleges, churches and religious groups, local governments, large and small businesses and individual citizens. LPTV modes of operation and programming vary widely. These include satellite-delivered programming services, syndicated programs, movies and a wide range of locally-produced programs. LPTV stations sometimes tailor program segments or entire schedules to specific viewer groups (on the basis of age, language or particular interest).

LPTV Station Operation (cont'd.)

On the technical side, LPTV stations transmit on one of the standard VHF or UHF television channels. The distance at which a station can be viewed depends on a variety of factors - antenna height, transmitter power, transmitting antenna and the nature of the environment (rural or urban, hilly or flat terrain).

Applying for an LPTV Station

New applications for digital LPTV and TV translator stations are only accepted during designated filing window periods. Applications for new analog stations are no longer accepted. The FCC announces these window periods at least 30 days before the opening of the window. The announcement provides details on how to file. Interested applicants should periodically check the FCC's Media Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/media-bureau for window announcements.

FCC Requirements

LPTV stations have "secondary spectrum priority" to full-service stations. This means LPTV stations **must not** cause interference to the reception of existing or future full-service television stations, must accept interference from full-service stations, and must yield to new full-service stations where interference occurs.

When there is interference between cable systems and LPTV stations, a "first in time, first in right" policy applies. Under this policy, the cable system or LPTV station that had initial use of the channel has first priority and is not responsible for correcting the interference.

Owning and Operating an LPTV Station

There is no limit on the number of LPTV stations that may be owned by any one entity. Current broadcast licensees, cable operators and newspapers may own LPTV stations. LPTV stations may operate on any available VHF (2-13) or UHF (14-51) channel provided that they do not cause objectionable interference.

Operating an LPTV Station (con't.d)

The FCC does not allocate channels for LPTV service. Applicants select channels and apply during a given time period.

Analog LPTV stations are limited to an effective radiated power of 3 kilowatts (VHF) and 150 kilowatts (UHF). Digital LPTV stations are limited to an effective radiated power of 3 kilowatts (VHF) and 15 kilowatts (UHF). There are no limits on transmitter output power and on antenna height, as long as the tower structure has been registered with the FCC.

Programming and Programming Content

LPTV stations are subject to a minimum of program-related regulations. There are no prescribed amounts of non-entertainment programming or local programming, and there are no limits on commercials, and no minimum hours of operation. However, the broadcast of obscene material is prohibited at all times and the broadcast of indecent and profane material is prohibited between 6 A.M. and 10 P.M.

For More Information

For more information on LPTV stations, visit the FCC's Media Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/media-bureau. For information about other communications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

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

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

This fact sheet is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceedings or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

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