

FCC Consumer Advisory

OPERATION OF WIRELESS MICROPHONES (AND SIMILAR DEVICES) IN 700 MHz BAND WERE PROHIBITED AFTER JUNE 12, 2010

Under a new FCC rule, anyone who uses a wireless microphone (or similar device) that operates in the 700 MHz Band must have stopped operating their wireless microphone (or similar device) by June 12, 2010.

All users of 700 MHz Band wireless microphones (and similar devices) who wish to continue to use their equipment – including users such as theaters, churches, schools, conference centers, theme parks and musicians – must have retuned or replaced, if necessary, their equipment by June 12, 2010. **Wireless microphones (and similar devices) that operate outside of the 700 MHz Band are not affected by the FCC's actions and may continue to operate.**

Why did the FCC make this rule?

Certain wireless microphones (and similar devices) have operated in frequencies that are needed for public safety. When this equipment was first designed, the frequencies they used were in between the frequencies that television stations used to broadcast television programs. With the completion of the digital television (DTV) transition on June 12, 2009, television stations no longer use the frequencies between 698 and 806 MHz (the 700 MHz Band) for broadcast. These frequencies are now being used by public safety entities (such as police, fire and emergency services) and by commercial providers of wireless services (such as wireless broadband services).

The wireless microphones (and similar devices) that operate in the old TV broadcast channels can cause harmful interference to the new services on those channels. Therefore, all users of wireless microphones (and similar devices) that operate on any of the frequencies in the 700 MHz Band – including both licensed users (under Part 74) and unlicensed users – have to stop operating in this band.

The FCC is only prohibiting the use of wireless microphones (and similar devices) that operate in the 700 MHz Band. You may continue to use wireless microphones (and similar devices) that operate on other broadcast frequencies. Microphones and similar devices with cords are not affected by the FCC's decision.

What is a "Similar Device" to a Wireless Microphone?

Equipment that is a "similar device" to a wireless microphone is also known as equipment for a "low power auxiliary station". Typically these devices can transmit over distances of 100 meters. Examples devices include wireless intercoms, wireless in-ear monitors ("IEM"), wireless audio instrument links and wireless cueing equipment (aka "IFB".)

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How to Determine if Your Equipment is Operating in the 700 MHz Band

Some wireless microphones (and similar devices) 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 the 700 MHz Band and may NOT be used.

In addition, the FCC's website provides information about which wireless microphones currently operate in the 700 MHz Band at www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones. Consumers may look up equipment by the manufacturer. The website also includes information about how to contact manufacturers for more detailed information about wireless microphone equipment. In addition, interested parties may call the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) where staff will be able to help consumers determine if their equipment is affected.

Consumers may also be able to contact equipment manufacturers for more information about their equipment. Contact information for the equipment manufacturers will be on the website at www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones-manufacturers-equipment-list.

Retuning or Replacing Existing 700 MHz Band Equipment May be Possible in Some Instances

Some wireless microphone (and similar device) equipment may be able to be retuned to operate outside of the 700 MHz Band. Consumers should contact the manufacturer to determine if retuning is possible and if it is cost-effective. If the equipment cannot be retuned to operate outside of the 700 MHz Band, the consumer will need to purchase new equipment. Wireless microphones and other electronic equipment should be recycled. Consumers should check with their local household hazardous waste collection program for disposal information.

Some Operations Needed To Stop Earlier Than June 12, 2010

In certain instances, wireless microphone (and similar device) users may be required to stop using their 700 MHz Band devices immediately. In other instances there may be a 60 day notice informing users that they must stop using their devices.

When Use Must Stop Immediately

All wireless microphone users that cause harmful interference to a 700 MHz public safety or commercial licensee must cease operations immediately. If a consumer is informed that the device the consumer is using is causing harmful interference, the consumer must cease operations immediately.

60 Day Notice to Stop Use (Early Clearing Process)

In some instances, public safety and commercial licensees may need to initiate their services in the 700 MHz Band by June 12, 2010. In these instances, users of 700 MHz Band wireless microphones must have stopped using their devices prior to June 12, 2010. This is called the "Early Clearing Process."

There are two ways that wireless microphone (and similar device) users may become aware of an Early Clearing Process that affects them. In both instances, wireless microphone users are required to cease operations within 60 days of the notice.

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- 1) The FCC will issue a Public Notice identifying markets where wireless microphone operations must cease. The Public Notices and summary information will be available on the FCC's website www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones or
- 2) Any 700 MHz Band public safety or commercial licensee may notify any entity operating low power auxiliary stations that the licensee is going to initiate use of their spectrum.

In the event that both of these notice provisions are used, the wireless microphone user will be required to stop operations based on the earlier of the two termination dates.

What Happens If Someone Does Not Stop Using a 700 MHz Band Wireless Microphone?

Using the 700 MHz Band for a wireless microphone (or a similar device) after June 12, 2010 could be extremely dangerous and could even be life threatening. Police and fire departments, and other public safety groups, use frequencies in the 700 MHz Band. Interference from wireless microphones can affect the ability of public safety groups to receive information over the air and respond to emergencies. Harmful interference to these communications could put you or public safety personnel in grave danger. In addition, use of your microphone can cause unlawful interference to consumer services provided using the 700 MHz Band.

Operation of wireless microphones in violation of these rules may subject the user to substantial monetary forfeitures and/or criminal penalties, including imprisonment. Because any operation in violation of these rules creates a danger of interference to important radio communications services and may subject the operator to severe penalties, this advisory emphasizes the importance of complying strictly with these legal requirements.

How do I report interference to my device which is operating on licensed 700 MHz spectrum?

Public Safety Licensees: If you are a Public Safety Licensee you may report interference to your 700 MHz device by contacting the FCC Operations Center 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at (202) 418-1122, or FCCOPCenter@fcc.gov.

Consumers: If you are a consumer that is using a device that operates on **licensed 700 MHz spectrum**, you may report interference to the FCC at www.fcc.gov/complaints.

- Click on "Wireless Telephone" for the type of complaint, then click "next" at the bottom of the page.
- Click on "Interference to Non-Emergency Devices" for the complaint category, then click "Next" at the bottom of the page
- Click on "Continue to Online Form"
- Complete the information on the Form.

You may also call the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) or mail your complaint to the FCC at Federal Communications Commission, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, Consumer Complaints, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554.

Only wireless devices that operate on licensed 700 MHz spectrum are permitted after June 12, 2010. Wireless microphones and similar devices were prohibited on the 700 MHz band after June 12, 2010.

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Part 74 Licensees

Under the Commission's Part 74 rules, certain licensees were permitted to operate their wireless microphones (or similar devices) in the 700 MHz Band as well as in other specified bands. After June 12, 2010, Part 74 licensees will no longer be permitted to operate in the 700 MHz Band. Part 74 licensees may continue to operate in the other, non-700 MHz Bands identified in their licenses, including in the core TV bands (i.e. channels 2-51, excluding channel 37), without further Commission action. For more information please go to www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones.

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