

# NEWS

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**Federal Communications Commission**  
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**Washington, D.C. 20554**

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. Cir. 1974).

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **FCC PROPOSES ACTION TO SPUR IMPROVEMENTS IN WIRELESS NETWORK RELIABILITY DURING DISASTERS**

### **Proposal Would Require Wireless Providers to Publicly Disclose their Percentage of Operational Cell Sites During Disasters**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today proposed action to improve wireless network reliability during disasters by requiring wireless service providers to publicly disclose the percentage of cell sites within their networks that are operational during and immediately after disasters. By providing consumers with a yardstick for comparing wireless performance in emergencies, the FCC's proposal could in turn encourage competition in the wireless industry to improve network reliability. The FCC is seeking public comment on this proposal and other approaches.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) adopted today, the FCC said that some wireless service disruptions may be unavoidable during emergencies, but the impact tends to vary among wireless service providers. For example, Superstorm Sandy disabled approximately 25 percent of cell sites in the affected region, with more than 50 percent of cell sites disabled in the hardest-hit counties, yet not all wireless networks were equally impaired. The FCC noted that the operational choices and practices of different wireless service providers may account for much of this variation, and it asked for comment on whether the NPRM's proposed disclosure requirement, by holding wireless providers publicly accountable, could spur improvements to network resiliency while allowing providers flexibility in implementing these improvements.

The FCC's proposal would require wireless service providers to submit to the FCC, for public disclosure on a daily basis during and immediately after disasters, the percentage of operational cell sites for each county within a designated disaster area. Information yielding these percentages is already included in voluntary reports that wireless service providers submit to the FCC daily during disasters, albeit on a presumptively confidential basis and as part of a larger set of data.

In its NPRM, the FCC cited the public's increasing reliance on wireless networks to get help during emergencies. The great majority of 911 calls (for example, a reported 75 percent of such calls in California) originate on wireless networks, and a growing number of U.S. households rely solely on wireless phones.

The NPRM, which follows up on a series of field hearings that the FCC held in the wake of Superstorm Sandy to explore ways to promote communications network reliability and resiliency during disasters, focuses on improving the reliability of the networks used to originate most calls to 911. In a separate proceeding, which stems from the 911 outages that occurred after a June 2012 derecho storm in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest, the FCC has proposed measures to improve the reliability of wireline facilities that are needed to complete calls to 911 call centers.

Action by the Commission September 26, 2013, by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 13-125). Acting Chairwoman Clyburn and Commissioner Rosenworcel with Commissioner Pai dissenting. Acting Chairwoman Clyburn, Commissioners Rosenworcel and Pai issuing statements.

PS Docket No. 13-239

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