

**Date sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2013  
**Subject:** Compliance Date Set for Accessible Televised Emergency Information; Deadlines Set for Comments and Reply Comments

Accessible Televised Emergency Information. On April 8, 2013, the FCC adopted rules to make televised emergency information more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The new rules require emergency information that appears visually during a non-news program (such as when information about emergencies appears as crawls on the bottom of the television screen during a regularly scheduled program) to be provided aurally on a secondary audio stream. **Entities covered by these rules must comply by May 26, 2015.** The Weather Channel has an additional 6 months to comply, and DIRECTV has an additional 1 year to comply with regard to emergency information it provides via The Weather Channel.

New Requirements for Equipment. The FCC also adopted rules to ensure that certain equipment used to receive, play back, or record television programs is able to make secondary audio streams available. Secondary audio streams will convey emergency information, as well as video description, to make programs and emergency information more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. **Entities covered by these rules must comply by May 26, 2015.**

Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM). In addition to adopting the new rules, the FCC is asking the public to comment on three issues:

- (1) whether the FCC should require companies covered by the new rules to provide contact information and customer support services to help consumers who are blind or visually impaired navigate between the main and secondary audio streams;
- (2) whether services that deliver certain types of television programming over tablets, laptops, personal computers, smartphones, or similar devices are covered by the FCC's requirements for video description and accessible emergency information; and
- (3) whether the FCC should require content with video description on the secondary audio stream to include a particular tag (for example, marked "visually impaired") and whether the FCC should require television equipment to detect content tagged in such manner, when it is present, to make it easier for consumers who are blind or visually impaired to find the secondary audio stream.

**FNPRM Comment Deadline: July 23, 2013**

**FNPRM Reply Comment Deadline: August 22, 2013**

Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking:

[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-45A1.docx](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-45A1.docx)

[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-45A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-45A1.pdf)

For more information, contact Diana Sokolow, [Diana.Sokolow@fcc.gov](mailto:Diana.Sokolow@fcc.gov), or Maria Mullarkey, [Maria.Mullarkey@fcc.gov](mailto:Maria.Mullarkey@fcc.gov), of the Media Bureau, Policy Division, (202) 418-2120.

