

Date: Monday, April 04, 2016
Subject: The FCC Proposes Rules to Expand Video Description Access

On April 1, 2016, the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) proposing to expand the availability of video described programming. Video description makes video programming accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired by enabling audio-narration to describe key visual elements of a television program during pauses in the dialogue.

The FCC proposes the following key rule changes:

- Increase the amount of described programming on each included network carried by a covered broadcast station or multichannel video programming distributor, from 50 hours per calendar quarter to 87.5 (a 75% increase);
- Increase the number of networks required to provide video description from four broadcast and five non-broadcast networks to five broadcast and ten non-broadcast networks;
- Create a “no-backsliding” rule, so a network would remain subject to the rules even if it is no longer one of the top five or top ten ranking networks; and
- Require video programming distributors to provide proper customer support contacts in order to improve consumer access to video description.

The NPRM also seeks comment on other matters, such as a potential requirement for described video-on-demand programming, a dedicated audio stream for video description, and a change of terminology from “video described” to “audio described.”

Comment and reply comment due dates will be announced once the Notice is published in the Federal Register.

Links to the News Release:

Web: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-proposed-expand-video-description-rules>
Word: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-338677A1.docx
PDF: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-338677A1.pdf
Text: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-338677A1.txt

Links to the NPRM:

Web: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/video-description-expansion-nprm>
Word: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-37A1.docx
PDF: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-37A1.pdf
Text: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-37A1.txt

For more information about the NPRM, contact Lyle Elder at lyle.elder@fcc.gov and 202-418-2365, or Maria Mullarkey at Maria.Mullarkey@fcc.gov and 202-418-1067.