



Review of 2015 Hearing Aid Compatibility Rulemaking Actions

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Current Requirements

- Providers of covered CMRS services and manufacturers of handsets must offer hearing aid compatible (HAC) handsets— either a specific number of such handsets or a specified fraction of their total handset offerings (benchmarks)
 - To count as HAC, handset must be certified by OET as meeting specified HAC rating under approved ANSI technical standard
- Providers and manufacturers must also annually file a report with the FCC listing both their HAC and non-HAC handsets, to demonstrate that they have met the required benchmarks



Two Rulemaking Items in 2015

- Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
 - New Scope Adopted
 - Proposed Rules on New Benchmarks
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Standards Adoption



New Scope

- Current Scope:
 - Digital CMRS to the extent it is a real-time, two-way switched voice or data service that is interconnected with the public switched network and utilizes an in-network switching facility that enables seamless handoff
- Starting January 1, 2018 (or April 1, 2018 for small carriers):
 - Any terrestrial mobile service that enables two-way real-time voice communications among members of the public or a substantial portion of the public



Scope (ctd)

- Includes VoLTE, Wi-Fi Calling, and other IP-based two-way real-time voice services offered to the public
- Includes VoIP software applications that are installed in the handset by the manufacturer or service provider
 - To be offered as HAC, a handset must be tested and rated for all installed voice communications functionality, whether provided through software, hardware, or both
 - If, after testing and rating, the manufacturer or service provider installs additional VoIP software, it must ensure the handset remains HAC using worst-case results in order to continue offering handset as HAC



New Scope (ctd)

- Limited to operations within the 698 MHz to 6 GHz band (as under current scope)
- Excludes handsets used with:
 - Non-terrestrial networks like MSS
 - Services not offered to the public, including services over public safety and private enterprise networks
- Manufacturers may continue to obtain rating of handsets without T-coil testing of VoLTE/Wi-Fi Calling until January 1, 2018



Proposed Rules on Benchmarks

- FCC sought comment on whether to adopt a joint industry-consumer plan to revise current benchmarks
- Proposal for staged benchmark increases:
 - Two years after adoption of rules, FCC would require 66% of handsets be M3/T3 or better
 - Five years after adoption, FCC would require 85% of handsets be M3/T3 or better
- Exceptions for manufacturers/carriers with fewer than six handsets



Proposed Rules on Benchmarks

- Proposed process to determine whether to require that 100 percent of covered handsets be hearing aid compatible:
 - Task force would be created to examine achievability
 - Submits report to FCC by specified deadline
 - Based in part on report, FCC makes determination
- No decision at this time. FCC accepting public input in Docket 15-285.



Proposed Rules on Standards Adoption

- In a separate rulemaking, the Commission has sought comment on:
 - A more rapid process for adopting future revisions of the ANSI technical standard, C63.19
 - Requiring handsets to be rated under the 2011 version of C63.19, disallowing further use of the 2007 version
 - Adopting a wireless volume control requirement
 - Eliminating a special testing rule for certain GSM handsets
- No decision at this time. FCC accepting public input in Docket 07-250.



Questions and Answers

Thanks!