

FCC Consumer Advisory

Beware of Low Power FM Radio Scams

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has learned of scams that apparently target low-power FM (LPFM) station applicants.

Applicants report they have received emails or letters offering to “jet start” an LPFM station or telling them to buy equipment or services that may not be useful or necessary. Perpetrators of these scams may refer to the equipment or station as a “Part 15 device” or “Part 15 transmitter.”

Part 15 devices or transmitters are low-power, non-licensed transmitters. Examples of these types of transmitters are cordless phones, baby monitors, garage door openers, wireless home security systems and hundreds of other types of common electronic equipment that utilize very little power. Operators of Part 15 devices are not required to obtain a license from the FCC to use them.

Perpetrators of these scams advertise the Part 15 devices as a means to start an LPFM radio station. Some perpetrators have advised potential applicants to use the perpetrator’s expertise/services (for a fee) to prevent FCC rejection of their applications.

To Minimize the Risk of This Happening to You

Don’t be fooled into buying a product or service that is unnecessary. Buying a Part 15 device or transmitter will not automatically allow you to start an LPFM radio station. The FCC authorizes all licenses for LPFM radio stations. The license is free and is required before construction or operation of the station can begin.

To start an LPFM radio station, potential applicants must file an application during a certain time frame, when their applicable filing window is open. When new filing window dates are announced, notices are posted on the FCC’s website at www.fcc.gov/lpfm.

Remember, use discretion and don’t let anyone fool or scare you into buying a product or service that may be unnecessary for the licensing or operation of an LPFM station. Research all claims and check the FCC’s LPFM website if you have a question about the application itself or how to apply for a license.

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For More Information

For more information about LPFM radio stations, visit the FCC's Media Bureau at www.fcc.gov/topic/low-power-fm. For information about other communications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554.

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To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, visit www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/.

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