



Video Description

Background

Video description is audio-narrated descriptions of a television program's key visual elements. These descriptions are inserted into natural pauses in the program's dialogue. Video description makes TV programming more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. On August 25, 2011, the FCC adopted rules to implement the video description provisions of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA) (www.fcc.gov/guides/21st-century-communications-and-video-accessibility-act-2010). These rules are effective as of **July 1, 2012**.

Availability of Video Description

FCC rules require local TV station affiliates of ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC located in the top 25 TV markets (see list below) to provide 50 hours per calendar quarter (about 4 hours per week) of video-described prime time and/or children's programming.

- Local TV stations in markets smaller than the top 25 also may provide video description. Check with your local TV stations.
- Many Public Broadcasting System (PBS) stations also provide video description on a number of programs. Check with your local PBS station.
- The requirement to provide video description is extended to local TV station affiliates of ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC located in the top 60 television markets beginning **July 1, 2015**.

The top 5 non-broadcast networks - Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, TBS, TNT, and USA - must provide 50 hours per calendar quarter (about 4 hours per week) of video-described prime time and/or children's programming.

- Subscription TV systems (offered over cable, satellite or the telephone network) with 50,000 or more subscribers must carry video description.
- Subscription TV systems with fewer than 50,000 subscribers also may provide video description. Check with your subscription TV provider.

How to Access Video Description

Video description is provided through the TV or set top box "secondary audio" feature, which some TV controls identify as "SAP" or "secondary audio program." The secondary audio may also be identified as a language feature, such as "Spanish" or "SPA," because it is also used to provide Spanish or other language translations of English language TV programs. Depending upon the program being viewed, when listening to the secondary audio, you may hear the primary audio with video description, Spanish or other language translation, a duplicate of the primary audio, or silence.



Your TV user manual may provide information about activating the secondary audio feature, or you may contact the customer service department where you bought the TV or the customer service department of the TV manufacturer for assistance. If you have a set top box for subscription TV service, you may contact your subscription TV provider for assistance in activating the secondary audio.

Learn More

Networks, broadcasters, and subscription TV systems may provide information about the availability of programs with video description through their websites and in program guides. Some program guides may use the symbol (D) to indicate that the program is video described.

In the future, the FCC will provide links to these websites where they are available, and other information on video description on the FCC's web page at www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/video-description.

Top 25 TV Markets

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| 1 New York, NY | 14 Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL |
| 2 Los Angeles, CA | 15 Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN |
| 3 Chicago, IL | 16 Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, FL |
| 4 Philadelphia, PA | 17 Denver, CO |
| 5 Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX | 18 Cleveland-Akron, OH (Canton, OH) |
| 6 San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA | 19 Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne, FL |
| 7 Boston, MA (Manchester, NH) | 20 Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto, CA |
| 8 Atlanta, GA | 21 St. Louis, MO |
| 9 Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD) | 22 Portland, OR |
| 10 Houston, TX | 23 Charlotte, NC |
| 11 Detroit, MI | 24 Pittsburgh, PA |
| 12 Phoenix, AZ (Prescott, AZ) | 25 Raleigh-Durham, NC (Fayetteville, NC) |
| 13 Seattle-Tacoma, WA | |

Filing a Complaint

After these new rules become effective, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau will release a consumer advisory with instructions on how to file complaints concerning the new video description requirements, via the FCC's website. You can also file your complaint with 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 and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

The FCC will forward the complaint to the video programming distributor or provider, and the distributor or provider will have 30 days to respond to the complaint.



What to Include in Your Complaint

Your complaint should include the following information:

- Your name and addresses (both geographic and email, if you have an email address);
- The name, location (city and state), call letters, and network affiliation of the TV broadcast station; or the name and address of the subscription TV system plus the name of the network that provided the programming;
- Enough information to demonstrate that the video programming distributor has violated or is violating the FCC's video description rules, such as the name of the program or show; the date and time when it was shown; and a detailed description of the video description problem, including specifics about the frequency and type of problem (e.g., video description available during only part of the program or missing in its entirety – but remember that not all programming must be video described under the FCC's rules);
- The specific relief or satisfaction being requested;
- Any additional information that may assist in processing your complaint; and
- Your preferred format or method of response to the complaint (such as letter, facsimile transmission, telephone (voice/TRS/TTY), email, or some other method that would best accommodate you).

Resolution of your complaint may be delayed if the above information is not complete. You also can provide the FCC with any additional information you think appropriate (e.g., written-out examples of the video description, recordings you made of the video description problem, etc.).

The Commission will promptly forward complaints satisfying the above requirements to the video programming distributor involved. The video programming distributor must respond to the complaint within a specified time, generally within 30 days. The Commission will review all relevant information provided by the complainant and the video programming distributor and will request additional information from either or both parties when needed for a full resolution of the complaint.

For More Information

For more information about FCC programs to promote access to telecommunications services for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office website at www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro. For information about other telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau website at www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau, or contact the FCC's Consumer Center using the information provided for filing a complaint.

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For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print or audio), please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an email to FCC504@fcc.gov.

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

This document is for consumer education purposes only and is not intended to affect any proceedings or cases involving this subject matter or related issues.

6/18/12

