

DISTRIBUTION, SALE AND USE OF WIRELESS MICROPHONES OPERATING IN THE 700 MHz BAND PROHIBITED

FCC Consumer Facts

All operations of wireless microphones (and similar devices certified as “low power auxiliary stations”) **operating in frequencies between 698 and 806 MHz (the 700 MHz Band) must have ceased by June 12, 2010** – one year after completion of the digital television (DTV) transition – to prevent harmful interference to new public safety and wireless broadband services provided in the 700 MHz Band. Similar devices (i.e. equipment for low power auxiliary stations) include wireless intercoms, wireless in-ear monitors (“IEM”), wireless audio instrument links and wireless cueing equipment (aka “IFB”). **Wireless microphone operations *outside* of the 700 MHz Band are not affected by this action, and may continue.**

All users of 700 MHz Band wireless microphones (and similar devices) – including theaters, churches, schools, conference centers, theme parks and musicians – must have retuned or replaced, if necessary, their equipment by June 12, 2010.

Background

To ensure that the new public safety and wireless broadband services can operate effectively, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has prohibited, effective January 15, 2010, the import, sale, offer for sale or shipment of wireless microphones (and similar devices) intended for use in the 700 MHz Band in the United States. The FCC has also adopted a number of consumer safeguards for the users of wireless microphones, which inform consumers of their rights and obligations in operating wireless microphones. Finally, the FCC is engaging in a consumer outreach campaign to help wireless microphone users identify whether they may have a 700 MHz Band wireless microphone and inform users how the FCC’s rules will affect them.

The Operation of All 700 MHz Wireless Microphones (and Similar Devices) Must Have Ceased By June 12, 2010

All users of wireless microphones (and similar devices) – including both licensed users (under Part 74) and unlicensed users – must have ceased operations in the 700 MHz Band by June 12, 2010, consistent with the FCC’s long-standing goal of making this spectrum fully available for use by public safety and commercial licensees, and the customers that they serve. Wireless microphones and other devices, however, may continue to operate in the core TV bands (channels 2-51, excluding channel 37).

Some Operations May Need To Cease Earlier

If a public safety or commercial licensee has initiated, or will be initiating, operations in the 700 MHz Band in particular markets prior to June 12, 2010, users of wireless microphones (and similar devices) in those markets will be required to cease operations early, subject to the following early clearing process.

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Early Clearing Process

By June 12, 2010, a 700 MHz commercial or public safety licensee must have notified the FCC that it has initiated operations, including system testing or trials, on specified frequencies in particular market(s). Upon such notification, the FCC will issue a public notice that will be available on the FCC's website www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones that identifies the affected market area(s). Users of wireless microphones (and similar devices) in those areas must cease operation within 60 days of the release of the notice.

In addition, any 700 MHz commercial or public safety licensee must have notified any entity operating wireless microphones (or similar devices) of its intention to initiate operations on specified frequencies in the market in which the wireless microphone (or similar device) user is operating.

Upon receipt of such notice, the wireless microphone or similar device user in the affected market area must cease operation within 60 days.

Commercial or public safety licensees that have already initiated operations in the 700 MHz Band may, effective January 15, 2010, follow the same notifications procedures, triggering the same 60-day cessation obligation for users of wireless microphones or similar devices.

In the event that both of these notice provisions are used to provide notice to a particular wireless microphone or similar device user, the user will be required to cease operations in the market(s) in accordance with whichever notice provides for earlier termination of such operations.

Any Wireless Microphone Causing Interference In The 700 MHz Band Must Have Ceased Operations

Notwithstanding any of the early clearing mechanisms discussed here, wireless microphone (and similar device) users that cause harmful interference to a 700 MHz commercial or public safety licensee must cease operations immediately, consistent with the FCC's rules for secondary use. The FCC is in continuous communication with the public safety community to ascertain the extent of public safety use of the 700 MHz Band to help ensure that public safety agencies are able to operate free from harmful interference.

Manufacture, Distribution and Sale of 700 MHz Wireless Microphones Prohibited

The FCC has prohibited, effective January 15, 2010, the import, sale, offer for sale or shipment of wireless microphones and other low power auxiliary stations (i.e. similar devices) intended for use in the 700 MHz Band in the United States. This prohibition will help complete an important component of the DTV transition by clearing the 700 MHz band to enable the rollout of new communications services for public safety and for next generation wireless services for consumers.

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The FCC permits wireless microphones and similar equipment to operate in spectrum bands outside of the 700 MHz Band, including the core TV spectrum (TV channels 2-51, except channel 37). In addition, wireless microphones and similar equipment operate at lower power levels in unlicensed bands such as the 902-928 MHz and the 2.4 GHz bands. For wireless microphones and similar equipment that operate in the core TV spectrum, the FCC requires that the following consumer disclosure be displayed at the point of sale or lease.

Most users do not need a license to operate this wireless microphone system. Nevertheless, operating this microphone system without a license is subject to certain restrictions: the system may not cause harmful interference; it must operate at a low power level (not in excess of 50 milliwatts); and it has no protection from interference received from any other device. Purchasers should also be aware that the FCC is currently evaluating use of wireless microphone systems, and these rules are subject to change. For more information, call the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC) or visit the FCC's wireless microphone website at www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones.

The disclosure requirement does NOT apply to the sale of wireless microphones and similar equipment that operate outside of the core TV spectrum. For example, the disclosure requirement does not apply to wireless microphones that may operate on a licensed basis in the 169-171 MHz band (see 47 C.F.R. Section 90.265) or on an unlicensed basis in the 902-928 MHz or the 2.4 GHz bands (see 47 C.F.R. Section 15.247).

Unlicensed and Licensed Operation of Wireless Microphones

Wireless microphones (and similar devices) – both within the 700 MHz Band and in other frequency bands – are operated by unlicensed users (under Part 15) and by licensed users (under Part 74). Users of wireless microphones (and similar devices) operating in the 700 MHz band – whether unlicensed or licensed – must have ceased operations of all 700 MHz Band wireless microphones (and similar devices) by June 12, 2010.

Unlicensed Operations All users of wireless microphones (and similar devices) may operate the equipment on an unlicensed basis, subject to certain restrictions, the device (1) may not cause harmful interference; (2) must not be operated at a power level in excess of 50 milliwatts; and (3) must be operated in a way that accepts any interference that may be received. For most users – such as theaters, churches, schools, conference centers, theme parks and musicians – the use of this device is unlicensed.

Most wireless microphones are designed to operate with 50 milliwatts or less. Users are advised to consult their owner's manual, or other materials provided by the manufacturer or distributor, to determine the output power of their wireless microphone.

Licensed Operations Some users are eligible to obtain a license to operate these devices. These include specified entities – such as licensees of AM, FM or TV stations, broadcast networks and cable television system operators – set forth in the FCC's rules (pursuant to Part 74). These entities, which can operate with fewer restrictions

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(e.g., higher power levels, with interference protections) must first obtain a license before operating under the rules permitted for licensed use.

Pending Rulemaking The FCC has a pending rulemaking for wireless microphones (and similar devices), therefore the conditions under which purchasers are allowed to use such devices in the core TV bands may change when the Commission adopts final rules. To participate in the rulemaking proceeding, go to www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones.

Informing Consumers Whether They Have a 700 MHz Wireless Microphone

The FCC is working with organizations whose memberships include wireless microphone users and these groups are helping to inform all affected users. In addition, the FCC's website provides information about which wireless microphones currently operate in the 700 MHz band at www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones. Consumers may look up equipment by manufacturer. The website also includes information about how to contact manufacturers for more detailed information about wireless microphone equipment. Contact information for the equipment manufacturers is at www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/wireless-microphones-manufacturers-equipment-list.

Some wireless microphones (and similar devices) are marked with the frequency the device uses. If information on the device indicates that it operates on frequencies between 698 and 806 MHz, then the device uses 700 MHz spectrum and may not be used after June 12, 2010.

In addition, consumers may contact the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY where staff will be assisting consumers in determining whether their equipment is affected.

How to report interference to devices operating on licensed 700 MHz spectrum

Public Safety Licensees: If you are a Public Safety Licensee you may report interference to your 700 MHz device by contacting the FCC Operations Center 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at (202) 418-1122, or FCCOPCenter@fcc.gov.

Consumers: If you are a consumer that is using a device that operates on **licensed 700 MHz spectrum**, you may report interference to the FCC at www.fcc.gov/complaints

- Click on "Wireless Telephone" for the type of complaint, then click "next" at the bottom of the page.
- Click on "Interference to Non-Emergency Devices" for the complaint category, then click "Next" at the bottom of the page.
- Click on "Continue to Online Form".
- Complete the information on the Form.

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You may also call the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) or mail your complaint to the FCC at Federal Communications Commission, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, Consumer Complaints, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20554.

For more information about the use of Wireless Microphones you may contact the FCC at:

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

Phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322)
TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)
Fax: (202) 418-0232

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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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