



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC'S VIDEO DESCRIPTION RULES FOR CERTAIN BROADCAST STATIONS AND MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING DISTRIBUTORS (MVPDs) ARE NOW IN EFFECT

Washington, D.C.: As of July 1, 2012, broadcast affiliates of the top four national networks in the 25 largest markets and MVPD systems with more than 50,000 subscribers must comply with the Federal Communications Commission's (Commission's) video description rules. Video description is audio-narrated descriptions of a television program's key visual elements inserted into natural pauses in a program's audio soundtrack. This accessibility feature allows people who are blind and visually impaired to follow a program's content during television segments that only have visual images.

The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, signed into law by President Obama on October 8, 2010, directed the Commission to reinstate with some modifications the video description rules initially adopted in 2000. The FCC's new rules require covered broadcast affiliates of ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC located in the top 25 TV markets to provide 50 hours per calendar quarter (approximately 4 hours per week) of video-described prime time and/or children's programming. The covered MVPD systems, when they carry any of the top five non-broadcast networks,¹ i.e., the Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, TBS, TNT, and USA, must also provide 50 hours per calendar of video-described prime time and/or children's programming.

Additionally, the video description rules require all network-affiliated broadcast stations and MVPD systems to pass through any video description provided with network programming that they carry if they have the technical capability to do so and are not using it for other program-related content. Once a program is aired with descriptions, re-runs of that program must also include video description unless the capability of providing description is being used for other program-related content.

"The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act is the most significant disabilities legislation since passage of the American with Disabilities Act," said Chairman Julius Genachowski. "In implementing its video description provisions, the Commission is ensuring that for the first time, individuals who are blind or visually impaired will be able to enjoy many television programs along with the rest of the general public."

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¹ Excluding networks with a significant amount of live prime-time programming.