

Display of Captioning on Equipment Used to View Video Programming

Background

Closed captioning is the visual display of the audio portion of video programming. Captioning provides access to individuals who are deaf or have hearing loss and is often used in places where it is difficult to hear a TV program, such as restaurants and exercise facilities. Since 1993, the Television Decoder Circuitry Act has required television sets with screens 13 inches and greater to display closed captions. On October 8, 2010, President Obama signed the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA) into law, putting into place new mandates to give consumers access to closed captions through various other types of video devices, including many devices that are not subject to a 13-inch limitation. In January 2012, the FCC adopted rules implementing the CVAA as follows:

Implementation Date: January 1, 2014

- Equipment manufactured after this date that receives or plays back video programming using a picture screen of 13 inches or larger (measured diagonally) must be capable of displaying closed captions, if technically feasible. Equipment with screens of less than 13 inches in size must be capable of displaying closed captions, if doing so is technically feasible as well as achievable with reasonable effort or expense.
- If achievable with reasonable effort or expense, equipment manufactured after January 1, 2014 that records video programming must either enable the display of closed captions or pass through closed captions to the equipment used to view the programming. Viewers must be able to turn on and off the closed captions as the video programming is played.

Equipment

- Physical devices designed to receive and play back video programming, including smartphones, tablets, personal computers, and television set-top boxes, are covered by the rules.
- Equipment includes software installed by the manufacturer before the equipment is sold, as well as software that the manufacturer requires the consumer to install after the equipment is purchased.
- All recording devices and removable media players (such as DVD and Blu-ray players) are covered by the rules.
- Professional and commercial equipment is not covered by the rules.

- Display-only monitors are not covered by the rules.
- Manufacturers may seek waivers from the rules for any equipment that may be capable of receiving or playing video programming, but is primarily designed for other purposes.
- The rules require covered devices to enable consumers to adjust closed captions in a variety of ways, including their color (both text and background color), size, fonts, opacity, edge attributes, and language selection.

Filing a Complaint

If you experience a captioning display problem with your equipment after the implementation date, you may file a written complaint with the FCC. After the new rules go into effect, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau will release a consumer advisory with instructions on how to file complaints via the FCC's website. You can also file your complaint with the FCC's Consumer Center by 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

What to Include in Your Complaint

Your complaint should include the following information:

- Your name, street, city, county, state and zip code and other contact information such as a videophone or TTY number or email address;
- The name and postal address, website, or email address of the equipment manufacturer (if known);
- Information sufficient to identify the equipment and software used to view the program or show, including make and model number;
- A detailed description of the captioning display problem, including specifics about the type of problem (e.g., captions will not display; cannot adjust background color or caption color);
- Any additional information that may assist in processing your complaint; and
- Your preferred format or method of receiving a response to your 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 Information Above Is Incomplete



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 communications 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 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 the address above.

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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/.

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.

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