

May 21, 2012



TV TechCheck



The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Television Broadcast Engineers

Reminder – Video Description Requirements Begin on July 1, 2012

Beginning on July 1, 2012, full-power affiliates of the top four national networks (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC) located in the top 25 markets (based on the January 1, 2011 Nielsen ratings) must provide 50 hours per calendar quarter (about 4 hours per week) of video-described prime time and/or children's programming. Video description is the insertion of audio-narration of a television program's key visual elements into natural pauses in the program's dialogue. Video description is intended to make video programming more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. (See [TV TechCheck](#) from 08/29/2011)

Last August, the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") released an Order reinstating the video description rules initially adopted by the FCC in 2000. The FCC's original Video Description Rules were vacated by U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on the grounds that the FCC did not have the authority to make those rules. On October 8, 2010 Congress passed the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 ("CVAA") which directed the FCC to reinstate the previous video description rules, with certain modifications within one year of the CVAA effective date. (See [TV TechCheck](#) from 10/11/2010). The modified Video Description rules were reinstated on October 8, 2011.

Video Description is sent as a second program audio service carried in a DTV station's broadcast. Stations must have the ability to acquire the additional program audio carrying the Video Description track from their network and have the infrastructure in place in their plant to support the routing, encoding and transmission of an additional audio service. Stations that currently broadcast second language (e.g. Spanish) on an additional audio service already should have this infrastructure in place. The FCC has stated that second language and Video Description may share this additional audio service.

Key Elements

- Full-power broadcast television affiliates of the top four national networks located in the top 25 television markets must provide 50 hours per calendar quarter of video-described prime time and/or children's programming.
- Video-described programming counts towards the 50 hours per quarter requirement when it is aired for the first or second time by that distributor. Although subsequent airings do not count toward the quarterly requirement, they must include video description unless the exception to the pass-through requirement applies.
- Any broadcast station that is affiliated or otherwise associated with any television network, regardless of market size, must "pass through" video description when the network provides it. This requirement applies only if the station has the technical capability necessary to do so, and if that technical capability is not being used for another purpose related to the programming.
- For covered broadcasters who multicast, the obligation to provide video description applies only to the primary programming stream, unless another top-4 national broadcast network is carried on a multicast stream. The pass-through requirement, discussed above, applies to all network-provided programming carried on all of an affiliated station's programming streams.

- Broadcasters offering Mobile DTV have until October 8, 2013, to bring those broadcasts into compliance with the video description rules.
- Complaints alleging a failure to comply with these rules may be filed with the FCC by any viewer, and the FCC will act to resolve such complaints after reviewing all relevant information provided by the complainant and the video programming distributor.

A copy of the R&O is available [here](#) on the FCC Web page.

Reminder: June 30 EAS CAP Deadline

No later than June 30, 2012, all broadcast stations must have CAP capable EAS equipment installed and operating in their facilities. FCC rule 11.56 requires all broadcasters to have equipment installed and operating that can receive and decode National Level (federal) Emergency messages (EAS) encoded in the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) format.

The original CAP compliance deadline was March 31, 2011. In response to a petition filed by NAB and others, the FCC extended that deadline to September 30, 2011. On Friday September 16, 2011, the FCC released an order further extending the deadline to June 30, 2012.

This requirement was reaffirmed in the most recent FCC EAS Report and Order released January 10, 2012 (Fifth Report and Order in EB Docket No. 04-296 – “5th R&O”). The rules adopted in the 5th R&O also require broadcasters to interface with and monitor FEMA’s Integrated public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) server for those federal CAP-formatted EAS messages. However, because IPAWS monitoring will be largely conducted via an Internet connection, the FCC will consider, on a case by case basis, applications for waivers from this monitoring requirement based on the physical lack of availability of broadband.

The 5th R&O is available [here](#). The order extending the Cap compliance deadline is [here](#)

IEEE Broadcast Technology Society Issues Call for Papers

A Call for Papers has been issued for the 2012 IEEE Broadcast Symposium, to be held October 17-19, 2012, in Alexandria, Va. The Symposium Committee seeks timely and relevant technical papers relating to all aspects of broadcast technology, in particular on the following topics:



- Digital radio and television systems: terrestrial, cable, satellite, Internet, wireless
- Mobile DTV systems (all aspects, both transmission and reception)
- Technical issues associated with the termination of analog television broadcasting
- Transmission, propagation, reception, re-distribution of broadcast signals
- AM, FM, and TV transmitter and antenna systems
- Tests and measurements
- Cable and satellite interconnection with terrestrial broadcasters
- Transport stream issues – ancillary services
- Unlicensed device operation in TV white spaces
- Advanced technologies and systems for emerging broadcasting applications
- DTV and IBOC reception issues and new technologies
- ATSC and other broadcast standards developments
- Broadcast spectrum issues – re-packing, sharing

The submission deadline for abstracts has been extended to May 31, 2012. Visit the symposium [website](#) for additional information. This Symposium is produced by the [IEEE Broadcast Technology Society](#).

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