

# Broadcast Newsletter

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## **BEST WISHES FOR 2026!**

Each of us at Hardy, Carey, Chautin & Balkin, LLP wish you a blessed, productive and prosperous 2026! We look forward to the privilege of serving you in the year to come.

## **CHILDREN'S TELEVISION REPORTING DUE BY JANUARY 30, 2026**

The surest way for full power and Class A television stations to have issues with license renewal is to forget or incorrectly report compliance with the FCC's children's television rules. The renewal application contains important certifications about station compliance with the rule limiting the amount of commercial matter during children's programming targeting children 12 years old and under, and the separate rule requiring stations to air particular amounts of children's educational/informational programming targeting children 16 years old and younger.

Both rules have an annual reporting obligation with the same deadline – January 30<sup>th</sup>. By that date, stations must upload into their public file supporting material certifying compliance with commercial limits for the prior calendar year, and complete and file a children's television programming report reflecting adequate amounts of children's E/I programming aired during the prior calendar year.

The commercial limits rule prohibits stations from airing more than 10.5 minutes of commercial matter during children's programming on weekends, or more than 12 minutes during weekdays. A certification and any other supporting documentation must be uploaded to the public file by the January 30 deadline. Violations can occur if more than the allowed commercial matter is aired, or if the commercial matter is related to an adjacent program (i.e., a Hot Wheels ad aired during a Hot Wheels cartoon), in which case the entire program is considered commercial matter.

For the children's television E/I programming rule, a form must be completed and submitted in the License Management System by January 30 reporting the total number of children's E/I programming hours aired and how

much on each channel. The form is intensive, so best to start working on it now. While stations are obligated to air a minimum of 156 hours of children's E/I programming annually on their main channel, there are scenarios that allow stations to shift a percentage of E/I programming to secondary digital channels each quarter. Stations should pay close attention to the criteria in rule [73.671\(c\)](#) that must be satisfied in order for a program to qualify as educational/informational. Coming up short on the required number of hours gets a station further scrutiny, and unless other reported activities can "count" toward educational opportunities for children, the FCC staff must elevate the renewal application to the full Commission for further action, and potential fines. Several station renewals from the prior renewal cycle remain pending, awaiting Commission action.

We are available to assist stations in preparing or reviewing the form before submission. We encourage completion of these children's television requirements well in advance of the January 30 deadline, as OPIF and LMS slow down and malfunction when filings are crammed into the final day. The other reason to complete these early is the looming possibility that a new government shutdown at the end of January is possible, which would make OPIF and LMS unavailable.

## **ONGOING CLASS A / LPTV / TV TRANSLATOR FILING DATES**

In accordance with its earlier [Public Notice](#), the announced schedule of dates is continuing for Class A, LPTV and TV translator stations. On December 18th Class A, LPTV and TV translator stations were able to begin filing major change applications on a first come, first served basis specifying relocations of not more than 75 miles, in addition to filing any minor change applications. On **January 29, 2026 at 6p ET**, a temporary application filing freeze will go into effect for Class A, LPTV and TV translator station major change applications (minor change applications will not be frozen and may continue to be filed until **6p ET on March 12, 2026**). Finally, on **March 19, 2026 at 12:01 am ET**, the major modification filing freeze will be lifted, without limit or restriction, to permit the

filing of Class A, LPTV and TV translator major change applications and acceptance of applications for new LPTV and TV translator stations. Minor change applications can also be filed.

The application form for new LPTV and TV translator stations will not become available in LMS until approximately a week or so before the March 19, 2026 start date for such applications.

For any major change or new station applications, certain local notice requirements must be met, but the trigger date for those obligations is when the FCC issues a public notice accepting an application for filing. The form of the FCC's notice may come in the normal daily releases, or in a separately-issued document. Applicants should carefully monitor the FCC's daily and other releases to be sure local notice obligations are met. Beginning local notice too soon will negate the effectiveness of the notice.

## **FCC ADOPTS LPTV ORDER CHANGING VARIOUS RULES, DECLINING OTHERS**

The FCC has adopted a [Report and Order](#) in a proceeding begun by the prior administration that contemplated new regulations for LPTV stations, describing its action as providing regulatory clarity.

The Order adopts rule changes (1) updating how the relocation distance measurement is calculated for displaced LPTV/TV translators and LPTV Service channel sharing stations; (2) establishing a uniform maximum relocation distance for minor modifications; (3) establishing a formal method for LPTV Service stations to specify a community of license; (4) requiring LPTV Service stations to utilize a call sign that matches their service designation; (5) establishing a process for LPTV Service stations to formally change their service designation; (6) making clear what EAS equipment must be installed by LPTV stations; (7) clarifying the video program responsibilities of LPTV stations; and (8) revising the displacement rule to more clearly enumerate the circumstances that qualify a LPTV/TV translator station for displacement. The order also adopts revisions to other technical rules intended to streamline current processes, prevent interference, reduce burdens, ensure that all

applicants and licensees are treated equally, and clarifying the manner in which LPTV/TV translator channel sharing stations may apply for a new, non-shared channel.

The FCC declined to adopt rules limiting applicants' ability to round distance calculations, requiring LPTV station minimum operating hours beyond those under our current rules, making changes to the TV translator minimum operating rule, limiting the number of times LPTV/TV translators may change their service designations in one year, and restricting community of license changes for LPTV stations to no more than once per year.

## NEXT GEN TV FURTHER NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING COMMENTS DUE JANUARY 20

January 20, 2026 is the deadline for comments in the FCC further proposed [rulemaking](#) related to use of the ATSC 3.0 "Next Gen" transmission standard for broadcast television. Reply comments will be due February 18, 2026. The FNPRM seeks information about technical issues, elimination of ATSC 1.0 simulcast requirements, application processing, coverage requirements, mandatory carriage implications, signal strength measurement levels and techniques, and the wisdom of allowing widespread elimination of ATSC 1.0 signals before consumer devices are capable of receiving 3.0 signals. We anticipate a decision in this proceeding by the end of the fourth quarter 2026.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### January 10, 2026

**TV, Class A, AM & FM Stations (commercial & noncommercial):** deadline to complete and upload to online public file the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2025 issues/program lists and any foreign sponsorship identification reports

**Class A TV Stations Only:** deadline to complete and post to your online public file the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2025 certification of ongoing Class A eligibility

**Noncommercial Broadcast Stations:** deadline to complete and post to your online public file the 4<sup>th</sup>

Quarter 2025 report for any 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Fundraising conducted during the quarter

### January 29, 2026

**Class A, LPTV, TV Translator** major change application filing freeze begins 6p ET

### January 30, 2026

**All Commercial Full Power and Class A Television Stations** – deadline to complete and submit the 2024 children's television report in LMS **and** separately upload children's television commercial limits certifications for all of 2025 in the station online public file

### January 31, 2026

**Web Streaming Radio Stations:** deadline to remit annual license fee (minimum annual fee is \$1100 for each stream this year) and related statement of account with SoundExchange for the statutory license allowing streaming of sound recordings on the web. Payment can be made on SoundExchange's online filing portal "Licensee Direct."

### February 1, 2026

**Radio and TV Stations located in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, New Jersey and New York:** if five (5) full time employee threshold is met, prepare EEO public file report covering the period from February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026, upload it to the station online public inspection file and post it on the station website

**Mid-Term EEO Review for Radio stations located in Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma:** if station employment unit has **eleven (11) or more full-time employees**, an independent **mid-term EEO review** of your last two EEO public file reports by the FCC will occur in connection with the 2025-26 EEO public file report due February 1, and when uploading the report, each station in the SEU must indicate that the SEU has 11 or more full-timers using the "Mid-Term Review" tab in the OPIF settings section. If the SEU has **between five and ten full-time employees**, when uploading the 2025-26 report, each station in the SEU should indicate that the SEU has fewer than 11 full-time employees using the "Mid-Term Review" tab in the OPIF settings section (by doing so, no mid-term review of the SEU will take place)

**Mid-Term EEO Review for Television stations located in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi:** if station employment unit has **five (5) or more full-time**

**employees**, an independent **mid-term EEO review** of your last two EEO public file reports by the FCC will occur in connection with your upload of the 2025-26 EEO public file report due February 1. By uploading an EEO public file report, the FCC automatically knows that your television station meets the 5 or more full-time employee threshold for a mid-term review. So unlike for radio, there is no OPIF mechanism available or needed for TV stations to specify the number of SEU employees

## **March 12, 2026**

**Class A, LPTV, TV Translator** minor change applications filing freeze begins 6p ET

## **March 19, 2026**

**Class A, LPTV, TV Translator** major change applications resumes, minor change freeze is lifted, and acceptance of applications for **new LPTV and TV translator** stations begins 12:01 am ET

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Actual resolution of legal issues depends upon many factors, including variations of facts and applicable Federal laws. This publication is not intended to provide legal advice on specific subjects, rather, it seeks to provide insight into legal developments and issues that we feel could be useful to our clients and friends.

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