



# Broadcast Newsletter

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## **NEW FOREIGN REPORTING RULES COMING**

While the Report & Order is not yet public, the FCC has issued a news [release](#) that it has adopted new foreign adversary control reporting requirements for all FCC licensees. Reporting obligations will be tailored to licensees based upon factors that include the national security risk and reporting burdens.

Any new reporting will not become effective until a date in the future after the Office of Management & Budget reviews the new reporting requirements and burdens. We'll cover the new requirements in further detail in next month's newsletter or in client communications.

The Commission also adopted new [rules](#) codifying its procedures for reviewing foreign ownership control issues.

## **NEW NCE FM TRANSLATOR FILING WINDOW COMING IN 2026**

Chairman Brendan Carr has circulated an [item](#) for consideration by the Commission related to certain processing procedures and limits for a planned 2026 NCE FM translator filing window. While the dates of the window are not yet known, this will be the first time that the FCC has offered an opportunity for new FM translator signals in the noncommercial band. Applications will require certification of various matters to be decided using a points system.

The primary focus of the circulated item is a proposed 10-application nationwide limit in the filing window. The FCC has used such limits in other filing windows to prevent a flood of applications that are unwieldy to consider and process. A limit also prevents filers from "gaming" the system by filing multiple applications on different frequencies at the same site to increase chances of receiving a permit. Applicants will need to specify a noncommercial primary station. Reasonable tower assurance will also be necessary.

Once the Commissioners vote on this preliminary item, the FCC's Media Bureau will issue a public notice announcing filing window dates and procedures.

## CANDIDATE TV LATE NIGHT SHOWS NOT AUTOMATICALLY EXEMPT FROM EQUAL TIME OBLIGATIONS

The FCC's Media Bureau has provided new [guidance](#) clarifying how it will interpret whether candidate appearances on TV late night shows qualify as exempt from triggering equal time rights for other candidates.

Any legally qualified candidate appearance on broadcast stations triggers the right of other candidates to request, within 7 days of the appearance, equal time for their own appearance. Stations must then provide comparable time opportunities. However, there are some exceptions, including when a candidate appears on a bona fide news or news interview program. For many years, the FCC has interpreted TV late night show candidate interviews as exempt from equal time rights based on its view that those shows are bona fide news interview programs.

In the new guidance, the Bureau indicates that it will no longer consider every such program to be a bona fide news interview program, and that the circumstances of each appearance analyzed against the criteria (whether the program is regularly scheduled, whether the program is controlled by the station or an independent producer, and whether decisions on the content and participants in the program are based on newsworthiness and not partisan purposes. Stations may seek a declaratory ruling for any scenario before airing a program with a candidate.

The impact of this new guidance remains to be seen, but at least initially will likely deter the late-night TV shows from having candidate guests. While the guidance could be read broadly to include radio programs, Chairman Carr later commented that the guidance did not mention radio because similar issues have not been observed in radio. Nevertheless, radio stations should take note of the new guidance in scheduling legally qualified candidates if their intention is to claim exemption from an equal time request because the program is news or a news interview.

## DON'T MISS TODAY'S DEADLINE FOR CHILDREN'S TELEVISION REPORTING

No later than today, January 30, 2026, full power commercial and Class A television stations have important children's television reporting to complete. Stations must upload into their public file supporting material certifying compliance with commercial limits for the prior calendar year, **and** complete and file (in LMS) a children's television programming report reflecting adequate amounts of children's E/I programming aired during the prior calendar year. Missing these deadlines will cause headaches at license renewal time.

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

The window that opened December 18, 2025 Class A, LPTV and TV translator stations to file major and minor change applications on a first come, first served basis specifying relocations of not more than 75 miles has ended. A temporary application filing freeze is now in effect for major change applications, but minor change applications can still be filed until **March 12, 2026, at 6p ET.** One week later, 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. Applicants will also be able to file minor change applications.

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.

The FCC has begun processing some of the pending major modification applications by accepting them for filing. A 30-day period for petitions opposing the applications will follow. If no objections are filed, permit grants will follow in 2-4 weeks.

## EFFECTIVE DATE FOR UPDATED LPTV REGULATIONS

The updated LPTV regulations adopted in the FCC's [Report and Order](#) will become effective on February 23, 2026.

Rule changes include (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 stations to use a call sign that matches their service designation; (5) establishing a process for LPTV 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 adopted 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.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### January 30, 2026

**All Commercial Full Power and Class A Television Stations** – deadline to complete and submit the 2025 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 New Jersey and New York:** 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 Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma:** 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 resume, 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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