



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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December 19, 2016

Accessibility Requirements for Television and Set-Top Box Controls, Menus, and Program Guides

MB Docket No. 12-108

This Public Notice serves as a reminder that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) established accessibility requirements for televisions, set-top boxes, and other apparatus, which must be implemented starting on December 20, 2016, that are designed to receive or play back video programming.¹ This Public Notice also explains the consumer complaint filing process related to these accessibility requirements.

There are two categories of devices that need to be accessible.

In the first category are devices designed to receive or play back video programming, such as televisions, as well as devices designed to receive or play back video programming over the Internet, such as personal computers, tablets, smartphones, and other devices with pre-installed video players or pre-installed applications for watching video programming.² Manufacturers must ensure that control of built-in functions on these devices used for receiving, playing back, or displaying video programming are accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, if achievable.³ If the device is capable of displaying closed captioning or providing video description, the device must include a simple and easy-to-use way for activating those functions.⁴ Compliance with these accessibility requirements is required for devices manufactured on or after December 20, 2016.

In the second category are devices used to access multichannel video programming distributor (MVPD) services, which are commonly known as subscription television services, typically provided by cable, satellite, or telephone company fiber systems.⁵ This category includes devices that companies lease or sell to their subscribers, such as cable set-top boxes, and devices that manufacturers sell to consumers,

¹ *Accessibility of User Interfaces, and Video Programming Guides and Menus; Accessible Emergency Information, and Apparatus Requirements for Emergency Information and Video Description: Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 28 FCC Rcd 17330 (2013) (*Accessible User Interfaces Order*); *Accessibility of User Interfaces, and Video Programming Guides and Menus*, Second Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration, and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 30 FCC Rcd 13914 (2015) (*Second Accessible User Interfaces Order*).

² 47 CFR § 79.107(a)(1); *see also* *Accessible User Interfaces Order*, 28 FCC Rcd at 17348-49, 17350, 17353-54, paras. 28, 33, 39.

³ 47 CFR § 79.107(a)(1) and (c)(2).

⁴ 47 CFR § 79.109(a)(1) and (2).

⁵ 47 CFR § 76.1200(c).

such as devices with a built-in CableCARD slot or a pre-installed application to access MVPD services.⁶ Manufacturers of these devices and MVPDs must ensure that on-screen text menus and guides provided by these devices for the display or selection of video programming are audibly accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, if achievable.⁷ Compliance with these accessibility requirements is required on or after December 20, 2016, upon request by an individual who is blind or visually impaired, except as noted below.

If a device in this second category is capable of displaying closed captioning, the device also must include a simple and easy-to-use way for activating closed captioning.⁸ Compliance with this accessibility requirement is required for devices manufactured or leased to MVPD subscribers on or after December 20, 2016, except as follows:

(1) Compliance is not required until December 20, 2018 for relatively small MVPD service operators and systems; and

(2) Compliance is not required until December 20, 2021 for display-only monitors and video projectors.⁹

Filing a Complaint

If you experience an accessibility problem with the controls, menus, or program guides of a television, set-top box, or similar device that is manufactured, leased, or requested after the compliance dates described above, you may file a complaint with the manufacturer or MVPD, or with the Commission.¹⁰ Your complaint must be filed within 60 days after you experience the accessibility problem.

If you choose to first file your complaint with the company and it does not respond to you within 30 days, or if you are not satisfied with the company's response, you may send your complaint to the FCC within 30 days after the time allotted for the company's response. If you file your complaint with the Commission, the Commission will forward your complaint to the appropriate company. After receiving a complaint, the company will have 30 days to respond to you and the FCC.

At this time, you may file a complaint by letter, phone, fax, or e-mail.¹¹

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Phone: 1-888-225-5322

TTY: 1-888-835-5322

⁶ *Accessible User Interfaces Order*, 28 FCC Rcd at 17337, 17345, paras. 12, 23.

⁷ 47 CFR § 79.108(a)(1) and (c)(2).

⁸ 47 CFR § 79.109(b).

⁹ 47 CFR §§ 79.107(b), 79.108(b), 79.109(c).

¹⁰ 47 CFR § 79.110.

¹¹ The FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau is currently updating the Consumer Complaint Center to permit filing complaints related to the accessibility of television and set-top box controls, menus, and program guides through the Commission's online complaint filing system at www.fcc.gov/complaints.

Videophone: 1-844-432-2275

Fax: 202-418-0037

E-mail: dro@fcc.gov

If you need assistance filing a complaint, you may also contact the FCC's Disability Rights Office at dro@fcc.gov or by calling 202-418-2517 (voice), 888-835-5322 (TTY), or 1-844-432-2275 (videophone).

Your complaint should include the following information if available:

- Your name, address, and other contact information, such as telephone number and e-mail address;
- The name and contact information of the manufacturer or subscription television service;
- Information about the device or software used;
- The date or dates that you purchased, acquired, or used, or tried to purchase, acquire, or use the device;
- A description of the accessibility problem and what would solve the accessibility problem;
- How you would like the FCC to respond to you, such as by e-mail, letter, or telephone;
- If your complaint is related to the accessibility of a device used for subscription television service, the date that you requested an accessible device, and the name of the company and the person you contacted; and
- Any additional information you think is appropriate.

A fact sheet summarizing the accessibility requirements for television and set-top box controls, menus, and program guides is available on the FCC's website at <https://www.fcc.gov/television-and-set-top-box-controls-menus-program-guides-factsheet>.

To request a copy of this Public Notice in an accessible format (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 844-432-2275 (videophone), or 202-418-0432 (TTY). This Public Notice can also be downloaded in Word and Portable Document Format (PDF) at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/disability-rights-office-headlines>.

For more information about this Public Notice, contact Will Schell, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at 202-418-0767 or Will.Schell@fcc.gov.

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