

§ 73.643 Subscription TV operating requirements.

The non-technical rules and policies applicable to regular TV broadcast stations are applicable to subscription TV operations, except where specifically exempted in the provisions of those rules and policies.

[48 FR 56392, Dec. 21, 1983]

§ 73.644 Subscription TV transmission systems.

(a) Licensees and permittees of commercial and noncommercial TV broadcast and low power TV stations may conduct subscription operations only by using an encoding system that has been approved in advance by the FCC. Such advance approval may be applied for and granted in accordance with the procedures given in Subpart M Part 2 of the Rules.

(b) The criteria for advance approval of subscription TV transmitting systems by the FCC are as follows:

(1) Spectral energy in the transmitted signal must not exceed the limitations given in § 73.687(e).

(2) No increase in width of the television broadcast channel (6 MHz.) is permitted.

(3) The technical system must enable stations to transmit encoded subscription TV programs without increasing the RMS output power from either the video or audio transmitters over that required to transmit the same program material using normal transmission standards.

(4) Modification of a type accepted TV broadcast or low power TV transmitter for encoded transmissions must not render transmitter incapable of operating in accordance with the operating specifications upon which type acceptance was granted. (See § 2.1001 (b), (k))

(5) Interference to reception of conventional television either of co-channel or adjacent channel stations must not increase over that resulting from the transmission of programming with normal transmission standards.

(6) Subscriber decoder devices must meet the provisions, where required, of Subpart H of Part 15 of the FCC Rules for TV Interface Devices.

(c) Prior to commencing the transmission of encoded subscription programming, the licensee or permittee of a TV broadcast or low power TV station must perform such tests and measurements to determine that the transmitted encoded signal conforms to the radiated radio frequency and demodulated baseband and waveforms, transmitter operating power determination, and the occupied bandwidth limitations specified in the application for advance FCC approval of the system being used. A copy of the measurement data is to be maintained in the station files and made available to the FCC upon request.

(d) The licensee of a station transmitting an encoded subscription service must have at the transmitter control point the technical specifications for the system being used of both the aural and visual baseband signals and the transmitted radiofrequency signals, and have the necessary measuring and monitoring equipment, including transmitter output power measuring equipment, to determine that the transmissions conform to the advance approval specifications on file with the FCC. Full operating specifications for the system must be available to representatives of the FCC upon request.

(e) The operating power of the transmitters during encoded operations must be determined and maintained according to the procedures given in the application for advance approval.

(f) A station using an encoding system in accordance with the specifications filed with the application for advance approval is deemed to be exempted from those technical regulations of this Subpart and Subpart H to the extent they are specifically detailed in the application.

(g) No protection from interference of any kind will be afforded to reception of encoded subscription programming over that afforded reception of non-encoded signals.

(h) A licensee or permittee may make no modifications on a subscription encoding system that would alter the characteristics of the transmitted aural or visual signal from those specified in the application for advance approval. A licensee or permittee of a station replacing its encoding system

must perform the measurements required by paragraph (c) of this section. A TV broadcast station licensee or permittee must also send a letter advising the FCC of the new system being used as required by § 73.642(b) of this chapter.

(i) The station licensee is fully responsible for all technical operations of the station during transmissions of encoded subscription programming, regardless of the supplier of the encoding equipment or subscription program service.

NOTE: Stations transmitting encoded subscription programming prior to October 1, 1983, must comply with all technical and operating requirements of this Section no later than April 1, 1984. Stations not having the information to comply with this Section must obtain such information from the manufacturer of the encoding system being used, and if necessary, by measurements of the station's transmission system.

(j) Upon request by an authorized representative of the FCC, the licensee of a TV station transmitting encoded programming must make available a receiving decoder to the Commission to carry out its regulatory responsibilities.

[48 FR 56392, Dec. 21, 1983, as amended at 57 FR 48333, Oct. 23, 1992; 66 FR 58982, Nov. 26, 2001]

§ 73.646 Telecommunications Service on the Vertical Blanking Interval and in the Visual Signal.

(a) Telecommunications services permitted on the vertical blanking interval (VBI) and in the visual signal include the transmission of data, processed information, or any other communication in either a digital or analog mode.

(b) Telecommunications service on the VBI and in the visual signal is of an ancillary nature and as such is an elective, subsidiary activity. No service guidelines, limitations, or performance standards are applied to it. The kinds of service that may be provided include, but are not limited to, teletext, paging, computer software and bulk data distribution, and aural messages. Such services may be provided on a broadcast, point-to-point, or point to multipoint basis.

(c) Telecommunications services that are common carrier in nature are subject to common carrier regulation. Licensees operating such services are required to apply to the Commission for the appropriate authorization and to comply with all policies and rules applicable to the particular service.

(d) Television licensees are authorized to lease their VBI and visual signal telecommunications facilities to outside parties. In all arrangements entered into with outside parties affecting telecommunications service operation, the licensee or permittee must retain control over all material transmitted in a broadcast mode via the station's facilities, with the right to reject any material that it deems inappropriate or undesirable. The licensee or permittee is also responsible for all aspects of technical operation involving such telecommunications services.

(e) The grant or renewal of a TV station license or permit will not be furthered or promoted by proposed or past VBI or visual signal telecommunications service operation; the licensee must establish that its broadcast operation serves the public interest wholly apart from such telecommunications service activities. (Violation of rules applicable to VBI and visual signal telecommunications services could, of course, reflect on a licensee's qualifications to hold its license or permit.)

(f) TV broadcast stations are authorized to transmit VBI and visual telecommunications service signals during any time period, including portions of the day when normal programming is not broadcast. Such transmissions must be in accordance with the technical provisions of § 73.682.

[50 FR 4663, Feb. 1, 1985, as amended at 50 FR 9035, Mar. 6, 1985; 61 FR 36304, July 10, 1996]

§ 73.653 Operation of TV aural and visual transmitters.

The aural and visual transmitters may be operated independently of each other or, if operated simultaneously, may be used with different and unrelated program material.

[54 FR 9806, Mar. 8, 1989]