

§ 76.957 Commission adjudication of the complaint.

The Commission will consider the complaint and the cable operator's response and then determine by written decision whether the rate for the cable programming service or associated equipment is unreasonable or not. In making its determination, the Commission will only review the amount of the rate increase subject to the complaint. If the Commission determines that the rate change in question is unreasonable, it will grant the complaint and may order appropriate relief, including, but not limited to, prospective rate reductions and refunds. If it determines that the rate in question is reasonable, the Commission will deny the complaint.

[60 FR 52121, Oct. 5, 1995]

§ 76.960 Prospective rate reductions.

Upon a finding that a rate for cable programming service or associated equipment is unreasonable, the Commission may order the cable operator to implement a prospective rate reduction to the class of customers subscribing to the cable programming service at issue.

(a) For an operator that adjusts its rates using the quarterly rate adjustment system pursuant to Section 76.922(d), the Commission's decision regarding a prospective rate reduction shall remain binding on the cable operator for one year unless the Commission specifies otherwise.

(b) For an operator that adjusts its rates using the annual rate adjustment system pursuant to Section 76.922(e), for one year following the Commission's decision, the operator shall provide the Commission at least 30 days' notice of any proposed change.

[60 FR 52121, Oct. 5, 1995]

§ 76.961 Refunds.

(a) Upon a finding that a rate for cable programming service or associated equipment is unreasonable, the Commission may order the cable operator to refund to subscribers that portion of previously paid rates which is deemed unreasonable.

(b) The cumulative refund due subscribers shall be calculated from the

date of the first complaint filed with the franchising authority until the date a cable operator implements a prospective rate reduction as ordered by the Commission pursuant to § 76.960. The Commission shall calculate refund liability according to the rules in effect for determining the reasonableness of the rates for the period of time covered by the complaint.

(c) The cable operator, in its discretion, may implement a refund in the following manner:

(1) By returning overcharges to those subscribers who actually paid the overcharges, either through direct payment or as a specifically identified, one-time credit to those subscribers' bills; or

(2) By means of a prospective percentage reduction in the unreasonable cable programming service rate or equipment charge to cover the cumulative overcharge. This shall be reflected as a specifically identified, one-time credit on prospective bills to the class of subscribers that currently subscribe to the cable programming service or associated equipment at issue.

(d) Refunds shall include interest computed at applicable rates published by the Internal Revenue Service for tax refunds and additional tax payments. Interest shall accrue from the date a valid complaint is filed until the refund issues.

(e) At the time the Commission orders a cable operator to pay refunds to subscribers, the franchising authority must return to the cable operator an amount equal to that portion of the franchise fee that was paid on the total amount of the refund to subscribers. The franchising authority may return the franchise fee overcharge either in an immediate lump sum payment, or the cable operator may deduct it from the cable system's future franchise fee payments.

[58 FR 29753, May 21, 1993, as amended at 59 FR 17975, Apr. 15, 1994; 64 FR 35950, July 2, 1999]

§ 76.962 Implementation and certification of compliance.

(a) *Implementation.* A cable operator must implement remedial requirements, including prospective rate reductions and refunds, within 60 days

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from the date the Commission releases an order mandating a remedy.

(b) *Certification of compliance.* A cable operator must certify to the Commission its compliance with any Commission order mandating remedial requirements. Such certification shall:

(1) Be filed with the Commission within 90 days from the date the Commission releases an order mandating a remedy;

(2) Reference the applicable Commission order;

(3) State that the cable operator has complied fully with all provisions of the Commission's order;

(4) Include a description of the precise measures the cable operator has taken to implement the remedies ordered by the Commission; and

(5) Be signed by an authorized representative of the cable operator.

§ 76.963 Forfeiture.

(a) If any cable operator willfully fails to comply with the terms of any Commission order, including an order mandating remedial requirements after a finding of unreasonable cable programming service or equipment rates, or any Commission rule, the Commission may, in addition to other remedies, impose a forfeiture pursuant to Section 503(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 503(b).

(b) A cable operator shall not be subject to forfeiture because its rate for cable programming service or equipment is determined to be unreasonable.

§ 76.970 Commercial leased access rates.

(a) Cable operators shall designate channel capacity for commercial use by persons unaffiliated with the operator in accordance with the requirement of 47 U.S.C. 532. For purposes of 47 U.S.C. 532(b)(1)(A) and (B), only those channels that must be carried pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 534 and 535 qualify as channels that are required for use by Federal law or regulation. For cable systems with 100 or fewer channels, channels that cannot be used due to technical and safety regulations of the Federal Government (e.g., aeronautical channels) shall be excluded when calculating the set-aside requirement.

(b) In determining whether an entity is an "affiliate" for purposes of commercial leased access, entities are affiliated if either entity has an attributable interest in the other or if a third party has an attributable interest in both entities.

(c) Attributable interest shall be defined by reference to the criteria set forth in Notes 1–5 to § 76.501 provided, however, that:

(1) The limited partner and LLC/LLP/RLLP insulation provisions of Note 2(f) shall not apply; and

(2) The provisions of Note 2(a) regarding five (5) percent interests shall include all voting or nonvoting stock or limited partnership equity interests of five (5) percent or more.

(d) The maximum commercial leased access rate that a cable operator may charge to programmers that predominantly transmit sales presentations or program length commercials for full-time channel placement on a tier exceeding a subscriber penetration of 50 percent is the average implicit fee for full-time channel placement on all such tier(s).

(e) The average implicit fee identified in paragraph (d) of this section for a full-time channel on a tier with a subscriber penetration over 50 percent shall be calculated by first calculating the total amount the operator receives in subscriber revenue per month for the programming on all such tier(s), and then subtracting the total amount it pays in programming costs per month for such tier(s) (the "total implicit fee calculation"). A weighting scheme that accounts for differences in the number of subscribers and channels on all such tier(s) must be used to determine how much of the total implicit fee calculation will be recovered from any particular tier. The weighting scheme is determined in two steps. First, the number of subscribers is multiplied by the number of channels (the result is the number of "subscriber-channels") on each tier with subscriber penetration over 50 percent. For instance, a tier with 10 channels and 1,000 subscribers would have a total of 10,000 subscriber-channels. Second, the subscriber-channels on each of these tiers