

ALERT

Grant of Petitions for Waiver of the Audible Crawl Rule - Deadline Extended

May 26, 2015

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) issued a Memorandum Opinion and Order granting two Petitions for Waiver of certain provisions of Section 79.2(b)(2)(ii). This rule section requires that emergency information provided visually during non-newscast video programming be made accessible audibly to individuals who are blind or visually impaired through the use of a secondary audio stream (Audible Crawl Rule).

National Association of Broadcaster (NAB) Petition

The Commission granted the request of the NAB for a six-month extension of the deadline for the Audible Crawl Rule. Broadcasters now have until **November 30, 2015** to come into compliance with the Audible Crawl Rule requirements. Further, the Commission granted an eighteen-month extension of the requirement to aurally describe visual but non-textual emergency information – such as maps or other graphics. Finally, broadcasters were granted a waiver from the requirement to include school closing information in the audible crawls. NAB committed to working with consumer groups to find a more efficient alternative to communicate school closing information.

American Cable Association (ACA) Petition

The Commission also granted the request of the ACA for waiver of the Audible Crawl Rule for two classes of cable systems. First, hybrid digital/analog systems that lack the equipment to pass through secondary audio streams on their analog service will be allowed to comply with the requirement by providing consumers free set-top boxes. Second, analog-only systems were granted an extension until June 12, 2018 to comply with the secondary audio stream pass-through requirement.

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