

ALERT

News Sharing Agreements Related to Coverage of COVID-19 Need Not Be Placed in Online Public Inspection File

March 19, 2020

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a Public Notice on March 19, 2020, providing guidance for radio and television stations concerning news sharing arrangements that may be made to improve coverage of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Specifically, the FCC has clarified that any temporary, shared news gathering efforts that occur over the duration of this national emergency related to coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic need not be reduced to writing and placed in the stations' online public inspection files. Moreover, the FCC has stated that these *ad hoc* arrangements, which are precipitated by rapidly developing events, are outside the definition of shared services agreements. Ordinary sharing agreements not arising from the emergency would continue to be subject to the filing requirement.

As it has done since the outset of this emergency, the FCC recognized the critical role that broadcasters play in helping Americans stay safe and informed during the COVID-19 outbreak, and pledged that the agency will continue to "work with broadcasters to help them address operational challenges during this difficult time."

Should you have any questions about today's Public Notice, please contact one of the attorneys listed on this alert.

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