



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information: 202-418-0500
Internet: www.fcc.gov
TTY: 888-835-5322

DA 20-282
Released: March 17, 2020

GUIDANCE FOR STATIONS IN PHASE 9 OF THE POST-INCENTIVE AUCTION TRANSITION AS A RESULT OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

MB Docket No. 16-306
GN Docket No. 12-268

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization classified COVID-19 as a pandemic, and on March 13, 2020, the President declared a national emergency as a result of the virus. The Commission has been working closely with television stations engaged in completing their transition to their post-auction channel during the recently-completed phase 8, and those who are working to do so in phases 9 and 10, to monitor the effect of the public health precautions being taken to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus on the stations' ability to complete their transition by their assigned phase deadline. Stations assigned to phase 8 successfully met their transition deadline on March 13, 2020. We granted construction permit extensions to certain stations assigned to phase 8 in light of delivery delays of equipment being manufactured outside the United States. We have now become aware that at least one tower company has imposed a two-week suspension of field service, including work on repack-related construction, while it evaluates the evolving situation. We anticipate that there may be additional suspensions of service and other developments in this unfolding situation that may impact the transition.

Phase 9 of the transition began on March 14, 2020, and is scheduled to end on May 1, 2020. We recognize that the construction and delivery delays that are occurring as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as efforts undertaken by the stations themselves to protect the health of their employees and their families, result from circumstances outside of a station's control. As a result of these circumstances, any station scheduled to complete its transition in phase 9 that believes it may be unable to meet the May 1, 2020, deadline will be granted a waiver of the phase 9 deadline and reassignment to phase 10, which begins on May 2, 2020, and ends on July 3, 2020. Such a waiver request should state that the station's transition is delayed due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and be filed as a legal request for special temporary authority in the Licensing Management System and with a copy via email to Evan.Morris@fcc.gov and kevin.harding@fcc.gov.

We note that many stations in phase 9 may already be far enough along in their transition process that their efforts will not be disrupted by any construction and supply chain delays occasioned by COVID-19. These stations may wish to transition according to their original schedule during Phase 9 and will still be able to do so if they do not have direct downstream linkages to stations moving from phase 9 to phase 10.¹

This is a rapidly evolving situation, and information changes quickly. The Transition Scheduling

¹ Stations can view information concerning their linked station set and direct linked station neighbors at https://data.fcc.gov/download/incentive-auctions/Current_Transition_Files/. A station's upstream and downstream neighbors can also be viewed on each repacked station's LMS facility page by selecting the 'transition' tab. /

Plan incorporates flexibility to adjust the schedule for specific stations on a case-by-case basis as they navigate specific transition problems. We will continue to work with individual stations, including those impacted by COVID-19, on a case-by-case basis. As always, transitioning stations are encouraged to reach out to their assigned Regional Coordinator with specific concerns.² At this time, we are not amending any other testing period start dates or phase completion dates in the Transition Scheduling Plan but will continue to monitor the situation and will announce any other changes that may be warranted.³

Questions, please contact the reimbursement@fcc.gov or (202) 418-2009. Press contact: Katie Gorscak, katie.gorscak@fcc.gov or (202) 418-2156.

- FCC -

² See <https://www.fcc.gov/about-fcc/fcc-initiatives/incentive-auctions/transition-schedule> (select 'Regions' tab).

³ The testing period start date for Phase 10 will commence as scheduled at 12:01 AM on May 2, 2020.