



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC ADOPTS RULES FOR INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS TO ADVANCE HOMELAND SECURITY AND TRAVELER SAFETY

New Service at 5.9 GHz for Dedicated Short-Range Communications Will Enhance Public Safety

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today adopted licensing and service rules for the 5.9 GHz Band (5.850-5.925 GHz band) for Dedicated Short-Range Communications (DSRC) in the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Radio Service. ITS services will provide many public safety benefits that will enhance homeland security.

DSRC systems will provide a short-range, wireless link to transfer information between vehicles traveling at high speeds and roadside units or other vehicles. Some examples of short-range ITS applications include: intersection collision avoidance, work zone warnings, road condition warnings, electronic toll collection, and electronic payment for gas, fast food, or parking. ITS applications are expected to improve traveler safety, decrease traffic congestion, reduce air pollution, and conserve vital fossil fuels. The FCC has been working closely on ITS with the U.S. Department of Transportation and will continue this partnership as ITS applications are developed and implemented.

Background

In October 1999, the Commission allocated the 5.9 GHz band for DSRC-based ITS applications and adopted basic technical rules for DSRC operations. After the allocation was made, the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) – a Federal Advisory Committee to the Department of Transportation on ITS matters – worked to develop a consensus in the ITS community on licensing and service rules for ITS and, in July 2002, presented a recommendation to the Commission for service rules for DSRC operations in the 5.9 GHz band. In November 2002, the Commission initiated this proceeding to settle on ITS licensing and service rules, tentatively concluding that the 5.9 GHz band should be used primarily for public safety purposes, and asking for public comment on how to define “public safety” and DSRC for these purposes, as well as the appropriate basis for licensing roadside units (*e.g.*, site-based or geographic area) and how to achieve interoperability in the band.

Specifics of the New Rules

The new rules largely adopt the Commission's tentative conclusions from 2002. The FCC took the following actions:

- Adopted the tentative conclusion that the 5.9 GHz band should be used primarily for public safety purposes, noting that sharing the band with limited non-public safety uses would benefit public safety. Both public safety and non-public safety users will be eligible for licensing on all channels.
- Opted for open eligibility for licensing in order to encourage the intensive use of the band and spur the development of the innovative services.
- Adopted for ITS the standard developed by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the Federal Highway Administration, an agency of the DOT. The FCC noted that the adoption of this standard would help support the interoperability of ITS systems.
- Adopted a geographic area licensing regime where licensees will receive non-exclusive geographic-area licenses authorizing operation on seventy megahertz of the 5.9 GHz band and will register RSUs by site and segment(s).
- Concluded that DSRC operations in the 5.9 GHz band must coordinate frequencies through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce to avoid interference with government operations.
- Deferred resolution of the prior coordination issue between DSRC and FSS until ITS America and the satellite industry reach an agreement, but urge the parties to conclude as quickly as possible given the importance of public safety applications in the DSRC.

Action by the Commission December 17, 2003, by R&O (FCC 03-324). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin, and Adelstein, with separate statements issued by Chairman Powell and Commissioner Adelstein.

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