



NEWS

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FCC ADOPTS RULES FOR BROADBAND OVER POWER LINES TO INCREASE COMPETITION AND PROMOTE BROADBAND SERVICE TO ALL AMERICANS

Washington, DC - As part of its goal to promote access to broadband services for all Americans and to encourage new facilities-based broadband platforms, the Federal Communications Commission today adopted changes to Part 15 of its rules to encourage the development of Access Broadband over Power Line (Access BPL) systems while safeguarding existing licensed services against harmful interference. Access BPL is a new technology that provides access to high speed broadband services using the largely untapped communications capabilities of the nation's power grid. By facilitating access to BPL, the Commission takes an important step toward increasing the availability of broadband to wider areas of the country because power lines reach virtually every home and community. In areas where consumers already have broadband access, BPL can enhance competition by providing another broadband alternative. Access BPL will also facilitate the ability of electric utilities to dynamically manage the power grid itself, increasing network reliability by remote diagnosis of electrical system failures.

In the *Report and Order (Order)* adopting these changes, the Commission recognized the significant concerns of some licensed radio service users regarding the potential of Access BPL systems to cause interference to their operations. The Commission stated that its intention in adopting the Part 15 rule changes was to ensure that Access BPL operations do not become a source of harmful interference to licensed radio services. Based on extensive research and analyses, as well as experience, it concluded that the interference concerns of licensed radio users can be adequately addressed and that Access BPL systems will be able to operate successfully on an unlicensed, non-interference basis under the Part 15 model. The rule changes in the Order establish specific technical and administrative requirements for Access BPL equipment and operators to ensure that interference does not occur and, should it occur, to provide for a timely resolution of that harmful interference without disruption of service to Access BPL subscribers. The Order also sets forth procedures to measure the radio frequency (RF) energy emitted by Access BPL equipment.

Specifically, the *Order* by the Commission:

- Sets forth rules imposing new technical requirements on BPL devices, such as the capability to avoid using any specific frequency and to remotely adjust or shut down any unit;
- Establishes "excluded frequency bands" within which BPL must avoid operating entirely to protect aeronautical and aircraft receivers communications; and establishes "exclusion zones" in locations close to sensitive operations, such as coast guard or radio astronomy stations, within which BPL must avoid operating on certain frequencies;
- Establishes consultation requirements with public safety agencies, federal government sensitive stations, and aeronautical stations.
- Establishes a publicly available Access BPL notification database to facilitate an organized approach to identification and resolution of harmful interference.
- Changes the equipment authorization for Access BPL systems from verification to certification; and

- Improves measurement procedures for all equipment that use RF energy to communicate over power lines.

Action by the Commission, October 14, 2004 by *Report and Order* (FCC 04-245). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Martin, and Adelstein with Commissioner Copps dissenting in part and approving in part. Joint statement issued by Chairman Powell and Commissioner Abernathy, separate statements issued by Commissioners Copps, Martin, and Adelstein.

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