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LPFM Fact Sheet

- On January 20, 2000, the FCC adopted rules creating a new, low power FM radio (LPFM) service. The Report and Order was released on January 27 and was published in the [Federal Register](#) on February 15. The rules will become effective on April 17, 2000.
- At about that time, in mid-April, the Commission will issue a Public Notice announcing a 5-day application period 30 days hence.
- The new LPFM service will consist of two classes of LPFM radio stations with maximum power levels of 10 watts and 100 watts. The 10 watt stations would reach an area with a radius of between one and two miles, the 100 watt stations would reach an area with a radius of approximately three and a half miles. 100-watt stations will be authorized first.
- These LPFM stations would operate throughout the FM band. The stations will be geographically separated from existing stations on the same (co-channel) channel, the next (first adjacent channel) channel, and the channel two channels away (second adjacent channel). The new stations will not be geographically spaced from stations three channels away (third adjacent channel). For example, under the rules applicable to existing full power stations, where there is a station at 93.5 mHz," there is currently no station in the same geographic area on 93.7 (the first adjacent channel), 93.9 (the second adjacent channel) or 94.1 (the third adjacent channel). The spacing criteria for LPFM stations will allow an LPFM station to be licensed on the third adjacent channel, or 94.1 in the vicinity of the full power station.
- The rules provide for a 20 km "buffer zone" of additional separation from co- and first-adjacent channels so that existing FM stations can modify facilities without undue adverse impact. They also provide for separation from existing vacant FM allotments.
- The absence of third adjacent channel separations will not hinder the eventual implementation of an IBOC transition to digital radio service, if that method of transition is chosen by the Commission in its current rule making to establish digital terrestrial radio service.
- The new LPFM service will be exclusively noncommercial, there will be no commercial LPFM stations. In addition, current broadcast licensees or parties with interests in other media – cable or newspapers - will not be eligible for LPFM stations.
- LPFM stations will be licensed exclusively to local entities for the first two years of license availability. Later, however, non-local entities will be eligible for licenses. Each licensee may own only one station in any given community, however, eventually a licensee may own up to ten stations nationwide.
- Licensees will be subject to the same character qualifications as are currently applied to full power licensees. Unauthorized broadcasters will be disqualified unless they certify that they ceased operations when notified of their violation of FCC rules or by February 26, 1999.
- If mutually exclusive applications are received for LPFM stations in a given city, mutual exclusivity will be resolved through the award of points for established local presence, proposed hours of service, or locally originated programming. The point system would encourage mutually exclusive applicants to share their stations with other applicants.