



PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
1919 M STREET N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

11571

News media information 202/632-5050. Recorded listing of releases and texts 202/632-0002.

January 31, 1991

MODULATION MEASUREMENT

The Commission in recent months has received a number of inquiries from FM broadcasters regarding the measurement of modulation and Commission enforcement of the applicable rules. This Public Notice is intended to address those questions which have arisen, in part, from the introduction of new modulation measurement technology into the marketplace.

Since 1983 FM broadcast licensees have been allowed to select whatever equipment and techniques they believe will ensure that their stations do not overmodulate. Licensees do not necessarily have to employ modulation monitors nor does the Commission evaluate and endorse any particular manufacturer's equipment. Some stations continue to rely on monitors built prior to 1983 in accordance with Commission rules in effect at that time while others use newer designs embodying a variety of electronic techniques and specifications. Equipment meeting pre-1983 requirements is satisfactory for determining compliance with the current FM modulation requirements. Despite the technical differences it has been the experience of the Commission that all commercially manufactured monitors with which it is familiar produce satisfactory results which agree substantially with the Commission's rules.

In cases where a commercially manufactured monitor (properly installed, maintained and operated) has shown that a transmitter is being properly modulated, we have found that Commission measurements give comparable results. In other cases where Commission measurements have shown transmitters to be overmodulated we have found that commercially manufactured monitors also indicate the same overmodulation.

Overmodulation, when it occurs, is the result of licensee action and not differences in the technical design of monitoring equipment. Consequently if the Commission finds that a station is overmodulating the licensee will be held accountable.

For information contact Bernard L. Stuecker, Chief, Equipment & Standards Branch, Field Operations Bureau at (202) 632-7593 or William Hassinger, Assistant Chief, Engineering, Mass Media Bureau at (202) 632-6460.