



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## Radiofrequency Radiation and the Environment

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires all federal agencies to ensure that the environment is given appropriate consideration in agency decision-making. In 1985 the Commission decided that human exposure to radio frequency (RF) radiation was a proper environmental concern of this agency and specified that the "Radio Frequency Protection Guides" adopted in 1982 by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI Guidelines) would be used for determining the significance of such exposure.

Since January 1, 1986, applications for new broadcast stations, modifications of existing stations, and renewals must contain either an environmental assessment that will serve as the basis for further Commission review and action, or an indication that operation of the particular station will not have a significant environmental impact. See § 1.1307(b) of the Commission's rules. Most applicants, after appropriate analysis, certify that their operations will not have a significant environmental impact, which includes a determination that humans will not be exposed to RF radiation in excess of the ANSI guidelines.

It has come to our attention that some licensees either may not understand their responsibilities or may not be diligent in protecting humans from excessive RF radiation, particularly in cases where maintenance and repair work must be performed on or near antennas, tuning elements and transmitters. The obligation to protect humans from excessive RF radiation does not permit any exceptions. If, for example, it is necessary that a tower crew work on or near an antenna, the power to the antenna must be reduced for as much and as long as necessary to avoid exposing the tower crew to RF radiation in excess of the ANSI guidelines. The licensee may not refuse to reduce the power on the grounds that it could result in a temporary loss of audience or advertising revenue. Further, the licensee may not avoid complying with the ANSI guidelines even if a particular tower crew is willing to accept high RF exposure levels.

We recognize that multiple radiators located on the same or nearby towers present a special problem. Nonetheless, all licensees are jointly responsible for complying with the ANSI guidelines and, therefore, must coordinate their maintenance and repair activities and take any other appropriate steps necessary to ensure that no humans are exposed to radiation in excess of the recommended limits.

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The Commission considers that representations made during licensing proceedings with respect to safeguarding humans from exposure to excessive RF radiation are continuing obligations. Exposure of workers to RF radiation in excess of the ANSI guidelines and failure to comply with representations to the Commission in that regard are serious matters and may warrant further Commission action including imposition of sanctions.

By the Chief, Mass Media Bureau

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