

Understanding the Post-Auction Transition: A Glossary

Dependency

Dependency refers to when one station (Station B) cannot transition until another station (Station A) has moved to its post-auction channel because the current channel of Station A interferes with the future channel of Station B. We also refer to these as “linked stations.”



Figure 1:
Dependency

Daisy Chain

A daisy chain is a string of connected dependencies. In this example, Station A must transition before Station B. Station B must transition before Station C. Station C must transition before Station D. This means that Stations A, B, and C all must transition before Station D can transition.



Figure 2: Daisy Chain of Four Stations

Cycle

A cycle is a daisy chain that forms a closed “loop” where it is not possible for all stations to have the flexibility to broadcast on both their pre-auction channel and their post-auction channel, requiring all channels to move simultaneously. And, if they wish to test their newly installed equipment, they must coordinate this testing.

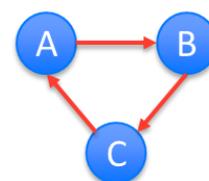


Figure 3: Cycle of
Three Stations

Interference

Each broadcast station has a license to reach a specific geographic area and population, and FCC rules limit how much broadcast signals from stations on nearby channels can interfere with each other’s coverage area or population served. In selecting new channel assignments after the auction, Congress directed the FCC to take reasonable efforts to preserve the coverage area and population served by TV stations that remain on the air, and FCC rules limit to 0.5% the increase in population served by a station that can be subject to interference on its post-auction channel. In the proposal, staff note that allowing an additional increase of up to 2% during the transition significantly reduces inter-dependencies between stations and would ease coordination issues.

Complicated Station

A “complicated station” is one that has characteristics that would likely add significant costs – and time – to its transition to a new channel. Examples include sites with known zoning issues or difficult tower structures with numerous collocated facilities. The Widelity Report identified these complicated stations and the Commission used this designation in determining the Final Television Channel Assignment Plan.

Auxiliary Antenna

Auxiliary antennae are mounted on the side of a broadcast TV tower and are often used as back-up transmitters. Auxiliary antennae can also be used facilitate the post-auction transition by transmitting on the pre- or post-auction channel while the station replaces or retunes the main antenna for the post-auction channel OR by serving as the transmission facility for a temporary channel.

Phase

The post-auction transition will be divided into phases in which groups of stations will construct new facilities, coordinate testing, and ultimately move to their post-auction channels by a particular date (the “phase completion date”). Each phase will have a defined “testing period.”

Testing Period

Equipment testing on post-auction channels will be confined to set “testing periods.” With the exception of the first phase, the testing period will begin on the day after the end of the preceding phase.

Rescan

Viewers that rely on over-the-air signals to watch TV (i.e., using an antenna rather than subscribing to a pay-TV service) typically tell the receiver to “scan” for available channels in their area – and they may periodically rescan to find new stations or locate a station that changed to a new channel. After the transition, multiple stations may transition to a new channel, requiring over-the-air viewers to rescan to ensure continued viewing.