



Addressing Cable Signal Problems

Cable television subscribers are entitled to signals that meet basic technical quality standards, as defined by the FCC. In keeping with those rules, cable companies serving 1,000 or more subscribers and operating above FCC power limits must test semi-annually to demonstrate that they meet these proof-of-performance standards. Some required tests may cause temporary service interruptions that affect certain channels. These interruptions are generally during off-peak viewing hours and should last no longer than a few minutes.

Even if testing requirements have been met, subscribers may still experience incidents when cable signal quality does not meet basic standards.

Here's what subscribers need to know if they're experiencing problems with their cable signal:

Poor Picture Quality

If you experience problems with picture quality, check to make sure your equipment and wiring is properly connected to cable, including your TVs and set-top boxes. If there are no connection issues, and no apparent equipment failure, check with your cable company to see if there are any signal issues within the system. If you're unable to determine a cause of the poor picture quality, you may need to schedule a cable technician visit to troubleshoot the problem.

Cable Signal Complaints

FCC rules require local cable companies to have plans in place to resolve subscriber complaints about signal quality. Such complaints should be submitted directly to your cable company.

Companies also must notify subscribers at least once a year about the process for submitting and resolving such complaints. In addition, FCC rules require that your cable company keep its signal quality standards, or proof-of-performance test data, available to the public through the FCC's fully searchable Public Inspection Files website at publicfiles.fcc.gov.

Local Franchising Authority Assistance

If your cable company fails to resolve your complaint, you can contact your local franchising authority, or LFA, which can be a state or local government organization that regulates your cable television service. The name of your LFA should appear on your cable bill. If not, contact your cable company or your local town or city hall for assistance.

The FCC's technical rules are generally enforced by LFAs. The rules also assist an LFA in judging the cable company's technical performance during the franchise renewal process, which can determine whether a cable company can continue to serve the community.



Closed Captioning

The FCC also requires cable companies to deliver closed-captioning data intact. This requirement allows hearing-impaired subscribers to receive a visual display of the audio portion of programming on digital television receivers.

Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) ; ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number above, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

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