

## Closed Captioning Display Requirements for Equipment

Closed captioning displays the audio portion of a television program as text on the screen, and provides access to television for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Captioning can be helpful when used in places where it is difficult to hear a television program, such as restaurants and exercise facilities. Originally required for televisions and converter boxes, closed captioning is now required for a variety of modern equipment used by consumers to view video programming. Today's closed captioning requirements also enable consumers to configure the display of closed captions in ways that suit their viewing needs.

### What must the equipment do?

- Equipment designed to receive or play back video programming using a picture screen of 13 inches or larger (measured diagonally) must be able to decode or display closed captions, if technically feasible.
- Equipment designed to receive or play back video programming using a picture screen smaller than 13 inches must be capable of displaying closed captions, if doing so is achievable.
- Equipment designed to record video programming must enable the rendering or the pass through of closed captions so viewers can turn the closed captions on and off when the video is played back, if doing so is achievable.
- Equipment covered by FCC rules must enable consumers to adjust closed captions in a variety of ways. Under these requirements, consumers must be able to adjust the font, size, color (both text and background color), opacity, and edge attributes of their closed captions.

### What equipment is covered by the FCC rules?

- Equipment designed to receive, play back, or record video programming transmitted simultaneously with sound.
- Television receivers, converter boxes, and set-top boxes.
- Physical devices such as smartphones, tablets, and personal computers.
- Software (such as video players) installed by a device manufacturer before it is sold, as well as software that the manufacturer requires a consumer to install after the equipment is purchased.
- Devices that record video programming.
- Removable media players, including DVD players that currently render or pass through captions.

### What are the Exceptions to the Rules?

- Professional and commercial equipment not typically used by the public.
- Display-only monitors with no playback capability.
- Equipment that is capable of receiving or playing video programming, but is primarily designed for other purposes, and for which the FCC has waived the closed captioning requirements.
- DVD players that do not currently render or pass through captions and Blu-ray players.

## Why Does the Date of Manufacture Matter?

- These requirements apply to equipment manufactured on or after January 1, 2014.

## Filing a complaint

Complaints about the display of closed captioning by equipment that receives, plays back, or records video programming may be submitted through the FCC's online [Consumer Complaint Center](#). Complaints may also be submitted to the FCC by phone or mail.

- 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  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

If you need assistance filing a complaint, please contact the FCC's Disability Rights Office at [dro@fcc.gov](mailto:dro@fcc.gov) or by calling 202-418-2517 (voice) or 1-844-432-2275 (videophone).

## Alternate formats

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov).

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