



## Radio Call-In or Shock Jock Programs

Consumers often complain to the FCC about call-in radio programs, usually regarding the subject matter being discussed or the perceived biases of the commentary. Many consumers also complain that the nature of the material being broadcast, like radio stunts or "shock jock" programs, is obscene, indecent, profane or otherwise offensive.

### Broadcasters' programming responsibilities

Broadcasters are responsible for deciding what their stations present to the public, and their programming is expected to inform audiences on local issues. However, "call-in" programs are not required to discuss community issues, and broadcasters are not obligated to give any individual an opportunity to participate in a broadcast (with certain exceptions involving candidates for public office.)

Broadcasters are expected to be aware of the important local issues in the communities that their stations serve, and to offer programming that will inform their audiences about these issues. The selection of issues and the kinds of programming offered are the broadcasters' responsibility. "Call-in" programs are not required to be used to discuss community issues.

Broadcasters are not obligated to give any particular individual an opportunity to participate in a broadcast unless the broadcast involves a candidate for public office. In general, broadcasters have wide discretion in choosing their programming.

### Rules governing obscene, indecent and profane programming

The FCC regulates the broadcast of obscene, indecent and profane programming. (For more information, see our guide on obscene, indecent and profane broadcasts at [www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/obscene-indecent-and-profane-broadcasts](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/obscene-indecent-and-profane-broadcasts).) Because obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment, it is prohibited on cable, satellite and broadcast TV and radio. However, the rules on indecency and profanity do not apply to cable, satellite TV and satellite radio because they are subscription services.

### What if I have comments or concerns about a specific broadcast?

All comments and/or concerns about a specific broadcast should be directed to the stations and networks involved.

You also can file a complaint with the FCC at [https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket\\_form\\_id=38844](https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=38844). The FCC may revoke a station license, impose a monetary forfeiture or issue an admonishment or warning for the broadcast of obscene, indecent or profane material. However, the FCC cannot restrict which specific programs broadcasters present, or tell them how to conduct call-in shows and other programs.

### 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 at the bottom of the page, or send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov).

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