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# Diving Deeply
## Into FCC.gov

**NAVIGATING THE DIFFERENT DATABASES AND ONLINE FILING SYSTEMS** that the Federal Communication Commission maintains can be a daunting task. But by familiarizing yourself with the FCC.gov site, you'll stay informed about your own station's regulatory status and have an opportunity to occasionally learn key information about your competitors as well. Investigating what lies behind the "Business & Licensing" dropdown menu at the top of the main FCC.gov page is a good place to begin. Click on the "Online Filing" link, and you'll be taken to a page that provides access to various electronic filing systems and databases, including Antenna Structure Registration; the Broadcast Radio and Television Electronic Filing System, which is also known as the Consolidated Database System (CDBS); the Call Sign Registration and Authorization System, and the Universal Licensing System, among others.

By clicking the "Broadcast Radio and Television Electronic Filing System (CDBS)" link, you will be taken to a page with information concerning the public and private sides of CDBS. The private side is used to file and amend various FCC forms that are submitted in connection with radio and television stations. This article focuses on searching the public side of CDBS.

To access the public side of CDBS, click the link that says "Consolidated Database System (CDBS) Public Searches." This will take you to the CDBS Public Access page, which currently gives you seven hyperlinks that correspond to six different types of information for which you can search: 1) Station Information, 2) DTV Station Information, 3) Application Information, 4) EEO Filing Information, 5) Ownership Report Information, 6) Antenna Information and 7) Engineering Data.

Click on the "Station Search" link and input your station's call sign (without filling in any of the other fields), then click "Submit Station Search." After a few seconds, the records in CDBS pertaining to your station will displayed.

Take care to note the Facility ID Number associated with the station for which you searched. You can use this number order to search for any application connected with your station's facility, even if the call sign has changed in the past.

For example, return to the CDBS Public Access page and click the "Application Search" link and input the Facility ID Number in the Facility Identifier field. In a few seconds a list of all of the applications that have been filed for the broadcast facility will appear in the search results (in theory).

If the word "Application" appears in the search results near the right margin, that application was filed electronically and can be viewed by clicking on the blue "Application" link. If you click the link next to the application that says "Info," you will be brought to a screen that has more detailed information concerning the application.

From this page, you can check the status of a pending application, relevant engineering information and even read any objections, petitions or comments filed relating to the application.

Another useful function found on the "Online Filing" page is the "Call Sign Reservation and Authorization System (CSRS)." Once you click on the CSRS link, you are brought to a page that allows you to query for available call signs.

*This is the second part of a two-article series delving into the information within the FCC's Web Site. The first appeared in the Nov./Dec. 2014 issue.*

If you are contemplating a call sign change, you can use this page to see if your desired call sign is already taken. If not, you can click "Request" to reserve a call sign and fill out an electronic form to request a change in your station's call sign.

**FORMS & FEES**
Go back to the FCC's homepage and the "Business & Licensing" dropdown menu and you'll find two other useful links, "Forms" and "Fees." As you might guess, the "Forms" page displays the current listing of forms and filings requiring a registration number, referred to as the Commission Registration System (CORES).

A CORES number is the same as your Federal Registration Number (FRN), which is obtained using either a valid Tax ID number or Social Security Number. Most online applications require the licensee's FRN and password before they can be filed with the commission. The link has access to each form you can print out.

Most FCC forms can be completed using Adobe Acrobat software, however please note that the Media Bureau requires most applications to be filed electronically.

By utilizing the "Fees" link, you can access application fee guides; information concerning electronic and wire transfers, and FCC fee-filing Form 159. There also is information concerning regulatory fees and a link to determine the regulatory fee for a particular radio or TV station.

**BUREAUS & OFFICES**
By returning to the site's homepage and clicking on the "Bureaus & Offices" dropdown menu, you can access an individual bureau or office page. In general, those pages include a list of relevant issues, bureau or office staff divisions and contacts, descriptions of the bureau or office responsibilities and an archive of documents that have been issued by a bureau or office.

The Media Bureau page (listed as "Media" within the "Bureaus & Offices" menu) also contains sections on useful FCC links, fact sheets, divisions, official documents and current headlines. For example, if you're seeking instructions on how to maintain your station's public inspection file, this is

the place where you can find it.

Also under the "Bureaus & Offices" dropdown menu is a link to The Enforcement Bureau's page. Here you get information concerning broadcast complaints, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), technical violations, along with other issues.

The Enforcement Bureau's main page also includes highlights of recent enforcement actions and press releases covering important actions taken by the bureau. If you search the "Quick Links" section along the right-hand side of the page, you will find lists of all of the Enforcement Bureau's actions against broadcasters for violations of the FCC's rules, such as the broadcast of obscene and/or indecent material, broadcast of telephone conversations and interference to broadcast stations and the EAS.

If you are interested in filing a complaint against a broadcast station, the "How to File Complaints" link in the "Quick Links" section will aid you in drafting the following types of complaints: Amateur Radio Complaints, Broadcast Complaints, Consumer Telephone-Related Complaints, Equipment Marketing Violations, Interference

## CONTACTING THE FCC's STAFF

**E**ACH BUREAU and office page has a link that lists the entity's structure and the e-mail addresses and phone numbers of FCC staff. There is also a link titled "Find People" located within "The FCC" dropdown menu on the site's homepage.

This link contains a directory of FCC employee telephone numbers and addresses. You can search the directory online or download the program and install it on your computer. It also can be downloaded and printed out.

Many questions can be answered on the site, eliminating the need to contact staff members. However, some questions are too complicated or nuanced for that approach. The Media Bureau has created a "Subject Matter Expert List" with

the names, e-mail addresses and phone numbers of staff who might be able to aid broadcasters in need of answers to a specific question.

The list can be found by going to the FCC's homepage, scrolling over the heading that says "Bureaus & Offices," selecting "Media" from the drop down menu, and clicking the link that says "Expert List" within the "About the Bureau" sidebar on the right side of the page. Some of the most helpful contacts phone numbers are included below:

- **Radio Broadcast forms:** (202) 418-2700
- **Television Broadcast forms:** (202) 418-1600
- **Broadcast, Cable, and MVPD EEO forms:** (202) 418-1450

Complaints, Local Telephone Competition & Other Common-Carrier Market Violations and Wireless 911 and E911 Violations.

The Enforcement Bureau has released self-inspection guides to assist broadcasters on complying with FCC regulations, available at: http://transition.fcc.gov/eb/bc-chklsts/.

There is a checklist for AM, FM, TV and Class A TV broadcast stations, as well as for FM translators, low-power FM and TV stations, TV Translators and TV boosters. These checklists are only available through the above link, you cannot navigate to them from the normal FCC.gov site.

These checklists are a bit dated, so it is always wise to check with your communications counsel to ensure you are following current regulations. However the checklists still provide broadcasters with an opportunity review and correct potential compliance-related deficiencies.

**OPEN PROCEEDINGS**

To access "Open Proceedings" from the FCC's homepage, scroll over the heading that says "Business & Licensing," click "Online Filing" and select the link that reads "Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS)."

This link brings you to ECFS's main page. The ECFS system is important for anyone who wants to interact with the FCC. From the main ECFS page, you can file a comment on a commission action, review other comments that have been filed and find FCC orders of ongoing FCC actions.

To obtain information concerning pending rule-makings and inquiry proceedings, click the "Submit a Filing (Express)" on the ECFS main page. This will open a list of all active FCC proceedings that have received comments in the past 30 days.

Another good resource for tracking recent developments at the FCC is the Media Bureau's Policy Division's main page. This page can be accessed from the FCC.gov homepage by selecting "Media" from the "Bureaus & Offices" drop down menu.

On the Media Bureau's main page, select "Policy Division, Media Bureau" from the list of links listed under the header "Inside

*The Enforcement Bureau link provides information concerning broadcast complaints, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and technical violations.*

the Bureau." This will bring you to the Policy Division's page, which provides links to useful information on current issues facing the FCC and headlines covering recent policy decisions of the commission, along with links to supporting documentation for each decision.

The FCC's "Daily Digest" is also a critical tool for tracking open proceedings at the commission. When browsing through "Daily Digests" (located on the FCC.gov homepage within the "Quick Links" sidebar on the right) you will notice that many postings are followed by a docket number, for example DA No. 14-123. The docket number is used to track all digests related to a certain issue. If a proceeding is of particular interest, return to the ECFS homepage discussed above and click the "Search for Proceedings" link.

This will bring you to a page where you can search by plugging the docket number in the "proceeding number" field, which will then bring up related FCC rulings or comments filed by interested parties. We suggest that you take the time to submit your concerns or suggestions concerning proposed regulations or policies that might affect your station.

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