

FCC Reminds TV Stations Transitioning on June 12 They Must Have Adequate Staff Available to Answer Viewer Phone Calls During the Cut-over and the Entire Weekend

by Richard R. Zaragoza and Paul A. Cicelski

In its Public Notice released earlier today, the FCC reminded stations of the requirement that television stations that have not yet made the transition to all-digital broadcasting must be prepared to answer calls about the transition immediately after they make the switch from analog to digital. The FCC noted its specific concern that stations have the appropriate staff available to answer calls after business hours and reminded stations that they should be prepared to handle the expected increase in calls, including calls forwarded directly to stations from the FCC's National Call Center, which will be staffed 24 hours a day. The Public Notice specifically requests that stations not transitioning to digital-only until June 12 should not only staff their customer referral locations the evening of June 12, but should also ensure that the phones are staffed over the following weekend, June 13 and 14.

According to the Commission, the customer referral telephone number can be staffed by individual station employees, by a group of stations in a market, or by a third party such as a state broadcasters association. In addition, the customer referral telephone number should be staffed with personnel "prepared to answer complex questions from viewers, particularly regarding necessary actions to take to get reception in specific locations, and other engineering issues."

Should you have any questions concerning the FCC's Public Notice, please contact any of the attorneys in the Communications Group.

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