



Broadcasting Information Bulletin CRTC 2025-266

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Guidance on the requirements for the addition of rebroadcasting transmitters

Summary

This information bulletin provides guidance on the requirements for the addition of rebroadcasting transmitters to radio licences.

Background

1. Rebroadcasting transmitters are designed to fill coverage gaps in a station's existing market¹ where the signal strength of the station's primary transmitter provides insufficient coverage. In certain circumstances, they may also be used to expand or provide service outside of the licensee's primary market.
2. The content on the rebroadcasting transmitter must be the same as that broadcast on the primary transmitter. As such, the content cannot be tailored for any additional markets the Commission authorizes by way of a technical amendment.
3. When a licensee files an application for a technical amendment to add a rebroadcasting transmitter, the Commission requires the licensee to present compelling technical or economic evidence to justify the requested amendment.
4. The Commission is increasingly concerned that there is a growing trend of licensees attempting to use technical amendments to add rebroadcasting transmitters to try to expand beyond their licensed market without providing sufficient rationale or evidence in support of their application as described below. The Commission is of the view that this type of entry into markets could undermine the integrity of the licensing process.
5. This information bulletin provides guidance to licensees on the requirements for applications for technical amendments to add rebroadcasting transmitters to help ensure the applications meet these requirements.

¹ Defined in the *Radio Regulations, 1986* as:

(a) in the case of an A.M. station, the A.M. daytime 15mV/m contour or the central area as defined by the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement (BBM) [now known as Numeris], whichever is smaller,

(b) in the case of an F.M. station, the F.M. 3mV/m contour or the central area as defined by the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement (BBM) [now known as Numeris], whichever is smaller.

Integrity of the licensing process

6. When assessing technical amendment applications, the Commission must maintain the integrity of the licensing process. Unlike applications for new services, which are processed via a public hearing, technical amendment applications follow the simpler Part 1 process. As a result, technical amendment applications do not necessarily draw the same amount of public attention or level of process as applications for new services.
7. When assessing an application for a new service, the Commission must determine whether the application meets the needs of the communities within the market the applicant seeks to serve. This consideration is even more important when the application is part of a competitive process, since the Commission must also determine which of the applications received would best meet the needs of the communities to be served. It also weighs any negative impact that the applications would have on nearby stations. As a result, the Commission expects that the technical parameters submitted as part of licence applications accurately reflect the intended operation, including the market the applicant wishes to serve, and that subsequent amendments to the parameters will only be sought in very limited circumstances.
8. Generally, where a licensee wishes to provide service to a market that it is not already licensed to serve, it is required to apply for a new licence.

When to file an application for a technical amendment

9. Applications to add rebroadcasting transmitters by way of a technical amendment should be filed in the following two situations:
 - (a) ***There is a demonstrated technical need to improve the signal in a station's existing market.***² In such cases, in its application, the licensee must submit evidence that shows the existence of signal gaps or reception issues within the area it is licensed to serve and demonstrate how the addition of a rebroadcasting transmitter will solve these issues.
 - (b) ***There is a demonstrated economic need to expand the station's existing market.*** In such cases, in its application, the licensee must demonstrate that expanding the station's coverage is necessary for its economic viability because the station's existing primary contour³ is insufficient to adequately serve the community or communities mentioned in the original licensing decision. This expansion must not have an undue economic impact on incumbent radio stations in the market.

² "Market" is defined in footnote 1 above.

³ Defined in the *Radio Regulations, 1986* as: a service contour marked for a licensed A.M. station or a licensed F.M. station on the map that pertains to that station and that is most recently published by the Department of Industry (also known as Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada).

When not to file an application for a technical amendment

10. Applications to add a rebroadcasting transmitter should not be filed by way of a technical amendment in the following two situations:

(a) *A licensee wishes to address technical issues outside the station's existing market.*

(b) *A licensee wishes to increase the area served by the primary contour of a station without an economic need.* This includes requests to add a rebroadcasting transmitter that result in the expansion of the existing market or the inclusion of a new market that the licensee is not currently licensed to serve.

11. In these situations, licensees should file an application for a new licence.

Exceptions in the public interest

12. Notwithstanding paragraph 10, there may be exceptional circumstances where the addition of a rebroadcasting transmitter which results in the expansion of a market can be requested by way of a technical amendment despite there being no demonstrable technical or economic need.

13. In such cases, licensees may submit technical amendment applications which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The applicant must provide compelling evidence that demonstrates the exceptional circumstances and that such an exception to the treatment of its application is warranted, based on public interest considerations. Such evidence might include a demonstration that the community is underserved (i.e., there is no other radio station serving the community), letters of support from the residents and businesses in the market and from the community they seek to serve, or other proof that the expansion of the service is necessary to fulfill particular objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*.

14. In those cases, the Commission will consider the unique factors of each station's situation, including such factors as the type of undertaking (e.g., community or Indigenous), location of the market (e.g., rural and underserved), and the community sought to be served (e.g., Indigenous or Official Language Minority Community).

15. If the Commission is not satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist, it may require that the licensee file an application for a new licence, in which case, it would be communicated to the licensee.

Secretary General