



**Narrow-band
is coming!**

Are You Ready?

7 Steps to Narrowbanding Compliance

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The following seven steps are necessary to successfully meet and comply with the FCC's Jan. 1, 2013, narrowband deadline for all Part 90 business, educational, industrial, public-safety, and local and state government two-way radio system licensees currently operating legacy wideband (25 kilohertz) voice dispatch or data/supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) radio systems in the 150 – 174 MHz (VHF) and 421 – 512 MHz (UHF) bands.

1. Verify that your company or organization has a current and valid FCC Part 90 radio station license. A license is required to legally operate any Part 90 VHF or UHF radio system. This license may have been issued directly to your company or organization or to a third-party repeater service provider. If you are unable to verify that a current license for your system exists, contact a local professional radio/wireless communications system vendor, reputable and qualified FCC licensing assistance service, or an FCC-certified frequency coordinator immediately to avoid any loss of use of your radio system or any penalties for unauthorized or illegal operation.

2. Conduct a full inventory of all radios in your system, including all portable, mobile, dispatcher used, wireless data or SCADA, and on- or off-site base or repeater radios. It's important to list the specific makes and model numbers of all radios inventoried. It might also be wise to note the serial numbers of each for internal tracking purposes.

3. Contact a local professional two-way radio service vendor to help you determine which models are capable of being reprogrammed for narrowband operation and which models aren't. Any radio that can't be reprogrammed to narrowband operation must be replaced. Most new radios procured during the past seven to nine years should be narrowband ready; however, it's recommended that all currently used radios in a system be verified as narrowband capable.

4. Initiate the internal business process of budgeting for and procuring any new narrowband-capable replacement radios as necessary. Any new radios procured should not be programmed for narrowband operation at this time. Operating in mixed mode — such as using both wideband and narrowband radios on the same frequency — is not recommended, particularly in data or SCADA systems. If possible, any new narrowband radios procured should continue to operate in the wideband mode until the actual switch from wideband to narrowband operation is made.



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5. Develop a wideband-to-narrowband conversion plan that reflects well-coordinated logistical and implementation strategies needed to accommodate the replacement and installation of any new narrowband-capable off-site base or repeater station radio(s) needed in advance. The plan should include reprogramming all radios in a system as close to simultaneously as possible to assure minimal disruption to ongoing radio communications operations. Work closely with a professional two-way radio service vendor during the development of any system conversion plan to insure there are no surprises during the actual narrowbanding cutover.

6. Schedule and coordinate with your radio service vendor, as soon as possible, dates and times for the actual system conversion (or cutover), making certain that all radio users have been advised in advance and are aware of the process. Also make sure that all handheld and mobile radios are readily available for reprogramming at pre-scheduled times.

7. The final step in the narrowbanding process is to modify your FCC radio station license to reflect the technical change in system emissions from wideband to narrowband and make any other changes or updates that may be required. Employing the services of a reputable and qualified FCC licensing assistance firm, FCC-certified frequency coordinator, or professional two-way radio communications service company to help with this process is strongly recommended.

Don't wait until the last minute to begin the narrowbanding process; you may be risking not only the use of your current radio frequency, but the investment you have made in your radio system equipment as well.

Compliments of Communications Service Inc.

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