

FCC Narrowband FAQ'S

There is a great deal of confusion of the requirements associated with mandatory conversion to 12.5 narrow band operation by the end of 2012. We hope you find this information useful.

Question: When do we have to convert to 12.5 kHz narrowband operation?

Answer: No later than December 31, 2012 for VHF and UHF users. 700 MHz standards are somewhat different. A very helpful overview prepared by Tait Electronics is available at www.info4u.us/TaitNBCalendar.pdf. Most of our following comments address the VHF and UHF bands since these are the most favored by the majority of current users.

Question: Can my existing equipment be converted to narrowband?

Answer: If manufactured for sale in the USA after January 1, 2000, most likely YES. You should check your models numbers with your supplier to be sure.

Question: Do I have to switch to digital operation?

Answer: No, although we believe there are significant advantages to digital that are worthy of review. We will be glad to discuss this further if you will give us a call at 205.854.2611 or email sales@falcondirect.com.

Question: Do I have to change my existing license when changing to narrow band?

Answer: Yes, unless you already have an authorization for 12.5 KHz Narrow Band or 6.25 kHz Very Narrow Band (VNB) operation.

Question: What's the deal with this VNB thing?

Answer: All manufacturers will be required to produce only equipment capable of operating at 6.25 kHz beginning in 2011. It would be wise to select equipment that meets this criteria now since this will be the new manufacturing technical standard. However, we should point out there is NO date certain for a licensee to go to 6.25 kHz emission. The only user mandate at this time is to cease all operations on 25 kHz by January 1, 2013.

Question: Is equipment currently available that is capable of operating at 25, 12.5 and 6.25 kHz at this time?

Answer: Yes

Question: What is required for FCC licensing for existing users that are not currently authorized for 12.5 kHz and/or 6.25 kHz operation?

Answer: If you operate at a narrower emission e.g. 11K0F3E from what's posted on your license e.g. 20K0F3E, you would want to modify your license to reflect the change to operate at that narrower bandwidth. If you do **not**, you are not strictly speaking, operating under the conditions of your license. As the FCC has mandated that everybody migrate to 12.5 kHz (technically 11.25 kHz) by 2013, you SHOULD convert under the spirit and letter of the law. If you don't modify your license by 2013 and the license still shows that 20K0F3E emission on your license you would not, strictly speaking, be in compliance and could be open to enforcement action by the FCC. In plain language – MODIFY YOUR LICENSE!

Question: What is the procedure for modifying an existing license?

Answer: For right now, a change in emission (bandwidth) is considered a "major" modification of the license therefore must be done via frequency coordination as per FCC rule section §1.929 (4) (ii) Classification of filings as major or minor.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) filed with the FCC a Petition for Rulemaking that proposes amending the Commission's rules to permit the deletion of an emission designator without the licensee having received prior frequency coordination. The Land Mobile Communications Council (LMCC), a non-profit association of organizations representing virtually all users of land mobile radio systems filed a petition in support. If approved by the FCC this would save licensees from having to go back thru a frequency coordinator to modify a license a 2nd time to delete the wideband emissions e.g. if it is phased migration prior to 2013 where some of the 25kHz equipment remains in service up to 2013. This Petition is still pending. To answer the question directly, a form 601 application must be submitted to either a industrial/business or public safety frequency coordinator for certification.

Question: So what is the cost for modifying a license?

Answer: As noted above, an application must be prepared and submitted to the frequency coordinator for review. Our recommended coordinator for Industrial Business Licensees is Enterprise Wireless Alliance, (EWA) or EWA in concert with FCCA for Public Safety applications. If migrating/adding narrower emissions is the only thing being done in an application, the charge is \$200.00 for exempt public safety entities per Call Sign e.g. governmental entities.

By exempt, we mean governmental entities holding public safety authorizations; otherwise, for entities that are non-exempt holding a public safety authorization the fee would be \$260.00. They would have to pay an additional \$60.00 application fee.

Non exempt license holders in the public safety pool are licensees whose organization status is other than a governmental entity and who do not have a 501c Federal Tax Exemption e.g. Hospital (Corporation), Volunteer Fire Company (Association), Ambulance Company (LLC).

1. Applications that seeks to effect changes other than those affecting a narrower bandwidth would not qualify for this rate.
2. See the one page worksheet referenced below. Use this worksheet only for any and all submissions to effect the addition/migrate to narrowband emissions; otherwise, if a request comes in any other way to migrate/add narrowband emissions you would be charged at a higher rate.

The worksheet is posted online at EWA's corporate webpage @:
<http://www.enterprisewireless.org/> in the box entitled **New Services from EWA**, labeled as Narrowband Transition Worksheet.

3. The Public Safety frequency coordinator will also want to see "copies" of the executed pages 3 & 4 (the last two pages) from the Main Form 601 originals. These pages establish basic eligibility to hold/modify/re-new an FCC license. Only items 44-51, 56-58 need be completed. If you don't have the originals, a copy of FCC Form 601 is available at www.info4u.us/FCC_Form_601.pdf.
4. Fax the signed worksheet with copies of the signature pages to EWA 1-717-337-9157. You can charge the fee for services to any major credit card.
5. If you have further questions regarding public safety narrow banding call the EWA toll free customer service number 1-800-886-4222 for assistance.

Question: So where do I get additional information of equipment and system choices?

Answer: Thought you would never ask! Go to www.the-end-of-confusion.us and/or www.icomfuture.com for more information. You'll be glad you did!