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FCC Releases Guide To Transmitting Antenna RF Emission Safety

In June, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Local Government Official's Guide to Transmitting Antenna RF Emission Safety. Over the past two years the FCC and its Local and State Government Advisory Committee have been working together to prepare a voluntary guide to assist state and local governments in devising efficient procedures for ensuring that the antenna facilities located in their communities to comply with the FCC's limits for human exposure to radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic fields. A copy of this guide can be found at the FCC's website: www.fcc.gov/oet/rf/safety.

The guide was designed for state and local government officials to consult when addressing issues of facility siting within their communities. This guide is also quite helpful for the tower construction industry. This guide contains basic information in a form accessible to officials, citizens and business people alike, that will alleviate misunderstandings in the conflicts area of RF emission safety. This guide is not intended to replace the FCC's OET Bulletin 65, which details technical information regarding RF issues, and should continue to be used and consulted for complex sites. The guide contains information, tables, and a model checklist to assist users in identifying sites that do not raise concerns regarding compliance with the Commission's RF exposure limits. In many cases, the model checklist offers a quick and effective way for users to establish that particular RF facilities are unlikely to exceed specific federal guidelines to protect the public from the environmental effects of RF emissions.

Appendix A to this guide contains a checklist that may be used to identify categorically excluded facilities that are unlikely to cause RF exposures in excess of the FCC's guidelines. Appendix B contains tables and figures that set forth, for some of the most common types of facilities, "worst case" instances beyond which there is no realistic possibility that exposure could exceed the FCC's guidelines. The FCC rules require transmitting facilities to comply with RF exposure guidelines. The limits established in the guidelines are designed to protect the public health with a very large margin of safety. These limits have been endorsed by federal health and safety agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration. Most

transmitting facilities create maximum exposures that are only a small fraction of the limits. The limits themselves are many times below levels that are generally accepted as having the potential to cause adverse health effects. Nevertheless, it is recognized that any instance of noncompliance with these guidelines is potentially very serious, and the FCC has implemented procedures to enforce compliance within its rules.

The guide begins with a summary of the FCC's RF exposure guidelines and some helpful background information. Next, it reviews the FCC's procedures for verifying compliance with the guidelines and enforcing its rules. Finally, it offers some practical guidance to help determine if personal wireless service facilities may raise compliance concerns. Note that the guide is only intended to help distinguish sites that are unlikely to raise compliance concerns from those that may raise compliance concerns, not to identify sites that are out of

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