



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Jacki Ponti (202) 418-0436
Email: jacki.ponti@fcc.gov

COMMISSION PROPOSES FLEXIBLE USE OF KU-BAND FREQUENCIES TO FURTHER FACILITATE PROVISION OF BROADBAND SATELLITE SERVICES ON AIRPLANES

Washington, D.C.- Today, the Federal Communications Commission proposed rules that address the growing demand for two-way broadband data and communications capabilities onboard aircraft. In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Commission proposed a regulatory framework for licensing the operation of Aeronautical Mobile Satellite Service (AMSS) systems to communicate with fixed-satellite service (FSS) networks in the Ku-band frequencies. AMSS potentially offers consumers the benefits of broadband services while traveling by air, both domestically and internationally. Aircraft Earth stations (AESs) in the AMSS can be used to provide broadband telecommunications services to passengers and crew on commercial, government, and executive/private aircraft. The *Notice* responds to an emerging marketplace need by potentially permitting more flexible use of the Ku-band while protecting existing fixed terrestrial and satellite services from harmful interference.

Specifically, the Notice

1. examines frequency allocation issues in the Ku-band where AMSS systems will operate and seeks comments on procedures to protect space research service and radio astronomy service sites from AMSS operations in the band;
2. proposes rules and procedures to license AMSS networks that would permit blanket licensing of an AMSS network similar to the licensing rules for very small aperture terminals (VSATs) that currently operate in the Ku-band;
3. seeks comment on the establishment of a regulatory framework that could enable foreign-licensed AES terminals to operate in United States airspace without causing harmful interference to domestic operations.

International Bureau Contacts: Steven Spaeth (202) 418-1539; Arthur Lechtman (202) 418-1465.

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