



Theatre Communications Group
520 Eighth Avenue 24th Floor New York NY 10018-4156
T 212 609 5900 F 212 609 5901 www.tcg.org

White Space Update Registration Launched on East Coast for Geo-location Database October 2, 2012

News

To provide interference protection for wireless microphones, the FCC has spent the last two years developing a national geo-location database in which, under certain circumstances, venues may register frequencies. The database will then instruct any White Space device within 400 meters to refrain from operating on those frequencies. Registration has been launched on the East Coast, and is currently limited to the following states: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia and North Carolina, however it will eventually expand to the rest of the country.

We do not anticipate White Space devices, AKA TV Band Devices, will reach the market for at least six months, but since the FCC has launched the geo-location database, it is important to be up-to-speed with the new procedures and register intended spectrum use, if necessary. Please view the entire FCC release which thoroughly explains the geo-location database, the registration process, answers questions and provides FCC contact information. Performing arts organizations using large numbers of wireless microphones are urged to inform your sound engineers and production staff and to advise them to take this opportunity to access the web-portal and register in the database. If you encounter any difficulties, please report back to Laurie Baskin at <mailto:lbaskin@tcg.org>. Here is the link to the FCC Public Notice:

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-12-1514A1.pdf

Background

On September 23, 2010 the Federal Communications Commission unanimously adopted a "Second Memorandum Opinion and Order" in its TV White Spaces proceeding. The Commission decided to permit the operation of new White Space devices, aka – TV Band Devices – but also imposed protections for licensed and unlicensed wireless microphones such as those used in the performing arts.

As a reminder, these are the interference protections available to wireless microphone users, adopted by the FCC:

- Two national "safe harbor" channels set aside for entities using wireless microphones – which the Commission expects will permit 12 to 16 wireless microphones in any location.
- Additional channels in most markets available for wireless microphone use – these channels are unavailable to TV Band White Spaces Devices (those channels occupied by or adjacent to broadcast television stations).
- If a wireless microphone user needs more than these interference-free channels, it will be permitted to register its uses in a geo-location database



Theatre Communications Group
520 Eighth Avenue 24th Floor New York NY 10018-4156
T 212 609 5900 F 212 609 5901 www.tcg.org

which would provide an interference protection mechanism. This registration will require a showing that the available channels are insufficient for its needs and must be submitted to the Commission 30 days in advance to permit public notice and comment.

- Wireless microphones used in the performing arts will continue to operate under Part 15 as legitimate users of the broadcast spectrum.

Requirements for registration in the geo-location database:

- Theatres would have to ‘certify’ that they have exhausted the 2 safe-haven channels and other channels available in their area to participate in the database.
- Theatres could submit their needs for an entire year – multiple productions – if needs exceed the safe-haven channels. Submit requests at least 30 days before first production.
- Theatres should only request the channels they actually need – channels can be switched – the database will be quickly updated. (The FCC will not tolerate warehousing channels.)
- Theatres are not competing with each other or with other performing arts organizations for spectrum – the database is intended to protect against interference from White Space devices – not from other wireless microphone users. Therefore, wireless microphone users are encouraged to form coalitions, pool their collective wireless microphone needs, and if your coalition needs more than the 2 safe-haven channels and additional channels in your area, then you would request the additional channels together. Sound engineers will have to coordinate with each other to eliminate interference within the coalition.