

The Revised Complaint Process

In November 2008, the FCC revised the consumer complaint process. Viewers who believe that a television broadcaster has failed to meet its captioning obligations may initiate a complaint process either at the FCC or with the television station directly. Complaints must be in writing, and filed by e-mail, fax or letter, within sixty (60) days of the captioning problem.

For a complaint first filed directly with a broadcaster, stations must respond in writing to the complainant within thirty (30) days after receipt of a closed captioning complaint. If a station's response does not satisfy the consumer, the complainant may then file a complaint with the FCC.

If the complaint is first filed at the FCC, the FCC will promptly forward the complaint to the station. The station must respond in writing to the FCC and the complainant within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complaint from the FCC.

If the complaint is first filed at a video programming distributor regarding programming of a broadcast station, that provider (e.g., cable or satellite company), must forward the complaint within seven (7) days to the appropriate party (i.e., the station) and inform the complainant that it has forwarded the complaint. The distributor must also inform the FCC that it forwarded the complaint. Stations that receive complaints from video programming distributors must respond in writing to the complainant within thirty (30) days of the forwarding date of the complaint. **These new complaint procedures will become effective upon publication in the Federal Register announcing approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).**