NAB Radio TechCheck

The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Radio Broadcast Engineers

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Don't Forget the Basic EAS Rules

Last week, on June 13, the FCC issued forfeiture orders to two broadcast stations for violating the current EAS Rules. In each case the violations were based on the fact that neither station has its EAS encoder/decoder properly installed and operational. In one instance the station's encoder/decoder was installed but it was not functioning properly. In the other instance the station did not own an encoder/decoder because it was co-located with another station and they shared the EAS equipment. However, the stations were not co-owned and the Rules allow co-located stations to share equipment only when the stations are co-owned.

The Emergency Alert System now falls under the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau of the FCC. It is important to remember that, even though the FCC is considering a new Next Generation Emergency Alert System, broadcasters must comply with all the existing regulations contained in Part 11 of the Commission's Rules until such time as the FCC adopts new Rules.

Below are some of the key EAS rules:

- EAS Participants are responsible for ensuring that EAS Encoders, EAS Decoders and Attention Signal generating and receiving equipment used as part of the EAS are installed so that the monitoring and transmitting functions are available during the times the stations and systems are in operation.

- If the EAS Encoder or EAS Decoder becomes defective, the EAS Participant may operate without the defective equipment pending its repair or replacement for 60 days without further FCC authority. Entries shall be made in the broadcast station log showing the date and time the equipment was removed and restored to service. For personnel training purposes, the required monthly test script must still be transmitted even though the equipment for generating the EAS message codes, Attention Signal and EOM (end of message) code is not functioning.

- If repair or replacement of defective equipment is not completed within 60 days, an informal request shall be submitted to the District Director of the FCC field office serving the area in which the EAS Participant is located for additional time to repair the defective equipment. This request must explain what steps have been taken to repair or replace the defective equipment, the alternative procedures being used while the defective equipment is out of service, and when the defective equipment will be repaired or replaced.

- Required monthly tests originate from Local or State Primary sources. The time and script content will be developed by State Emergency Communications Committees in cooperation with affected EAS Participants. Monthly tests must be retransmitted within 60 minutes of receipt by EAS Participants.

- Analog and digital AM, FM, and TV broadcast stations must conduct tests of the EAS header and EOM codes at least once a week at random days and times. Effective December 31, 2006, DAB stations must conduct these tests on all audio streams. Effective December 31, 2006, DTV stations must conduct these tests on all program streams.

- EAS Participants must determine the cause of any failure to receive the required tests or activations and appropriate entries indicating reasons why any tests were not received must be made in the broadcast station log for all broadcast streams.

- Automatic interrupt of programming and transmission of EAS messages are required when facilities are unattended.

Broadcast personnel should review the EAS Rules to insure that your station is operating in compliance with the EAS regulations. A complete list of the Part 11 Rules can be found here: http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_07/47cfr11_07.html.

NAB AM Antenna Computer Modeling Seminar
November 20-21, 2008
NAB Headquarters
Washington, DC

Don't miss this opportunity for broadcast engineers to learn the basics needed to utilize modeling software such as MININEC and nodal analysis for designing performance-optimized AM directional antenna phasing and coupling systems and proving the performance of directional antenna patterns.

You will learn about:

- Moment Method Modeling Basics
- DA Proofing Using Moment Method Modeling
- Overcoming Limitations of Using Field Strength Measurements for DA Proofs
- State of the Art in Phasing System Design Nodal Analysis of AM DA Phasing and Coupling Systems
- Pattern Design Considerations for Optimum Performance

AM antenna experts Ron Rackley and Ben Dawson, along with antenna modeling software specialist Jerry Westberg, will lead the seminar demonstrating how moment method modeling makes analysis of actual tower current distributions possible and how a model can be used to proof an array provided the proper criteria are considered. All instructors are well known in the radio industry as experts in the field of directional antenna design and maintenance. Their decades of experience offer station engineers an opportunity to learn techniques, tips and tricks that can be immediately useful.

Seminar fee: $395.00 (NAB members) and $495.00 (non-members). For more information on the curriculum, how to register or housing go to AM DA Seminar on the NAB Web site or call Sharon Devine at (202)-429-5338. Register now for the NAB AM Antenna Computer Modeling Seminar!