

December 13, 2010



TV TechCheck



The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Television Broadcast Engineers

Congress Approves the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (CALM) Act

On December 2, 2010 Congress approved the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (CALM) Act which gives the FCC the authority to create rules intended to mitigate variations in volume level (loudness) between programming and commercials. Specifically, the CALM Act requires that within one year after the date of enactment (i.e. when the president signs the Act) the FCC must adopt rules incorporating by reference and making mandatory ATSC A/85 (and any of its successor standards).

A/85 is titled *Recommended Practice: Techniques for Establishing and Maintaining Audio Loudness for Digital Television*, and was approved by the ATSC in November 2009. This Recommended Practice provides guidance to broadcasters and creators of audio for ATSC high-definition (HD) or standard-definition (SD) television content and recommends production, distribution and transmission practices needed to provide the audio soundtracks to the digital television audience. It focuses on audio measurement, production and postproduction monitoring techniques, and methods to effectively control loudness for content delivery or exchange while maintaining a large dynamic range. It recommends methods to effectively control program-to-interstitial loudness including the use of the Dialog Normalization (dialnorm) metadata parameter to transparently set different content to a uniform loudness (See [TV TechCheck](#) from November 9, 2009.). The CALM Act limits the FCC to focusing on those parts of the recommended practice that concerns the transmission of commercial advertisements by a television broadcast station, cable operator or other multichannel video programming distributor.

The Act also requires that the rules adopted by the FCC take effect one year after those rules are adopted. So stations will have two years from the time the president signs the Act (or approximately December 2012) to come into compliance with the new rules. In addition, for stations that demonstrate that obtaining the equipment needed to comply with the new regulations would result in financial hardship, the FCC may grant a waiver of the effective date by one year and then may renew that waiver for an additional year.

Finally, the Act states that any broadcast television operator, cable operator or other multichannel video programming distributor that installs, utilizes and maintains in a commercially reasonable manner the equipment and associated software in compliance with the regulations issued by the FCC shall be deemed to be in compliance with such regulations.

A copy of the bill can be found on *THOMAS*, The Library of Congress' legislative information Web page <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. Under the heading "Search Bill Summary & Status" search for bill number "S2847" Select text of the legislation and the most recent text is available under Item #4. A/85 is available on the ATSC Web page here: <http://www.atsc.org/cms/index.php/standards/recommended-practices/185-a85-techniques-for-establishing-and-maintaining-audio-loudness-for-digital-television>.

ATSC Call for Papers for Second ATSC Symposium on Next Generation Broadcast Television

February 15, 2011, 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Rancho Las Palmas, Rancho Mirage, Calif.

The [Advanced Television Systems Committee](#) (ATSC) has announced a Call for Papers for their Second ATSC Symposium on Next Generation Broadcast Television. This will be the second Symposium held by ATSC on new technologies that may have application for a next generation broadcast content delivery system.

Written abstracts will be considered by a subcommittee of the ATSC Planning Team on Next Generation Broadcast Technology. Abstracts of less than 500 words should be submitted to Jerry Whitaker, Vice President for Standards Development at the ATSC (jwhitaker@atsc.org). The closing date for submissions is December 24, 2010.

Nominate the Best!

NAB is currently accepting nominations for the 2011 NAB Engineering Achievement Awards. Established in 1959, the NAB Engineering Achievement Award is presented each year to an individual for their outstanding accomplishments in the broadcast industry. In 1991, NAB began giving awards separately for achievements in radio and television. The award winners will be recognized at the Technology Luncheon at NAB 2011 on April 13 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Additional information and nomination form is available at <http://www.nab.org/events/awards/entryRules.asp?id=1991>. The deadline for nominations is **January 21, 2011**.

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