



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## FCC Initiates Rulemaking on Distributed Transmission Technology for Digital TV Stations

*Washington, DC* – The Federal Communications Commission today adopted a *Clarification Order* and *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* that clarifies the Commission’s existing guidelines for stations’ interim use of DTS and initiates a rulemaking regarding the future use of Distributed Transmission Systems (DTS) by digital television stations.

DTS technology would allow stations to employ multiple synchronized transmitters spread around a station’s service area, rather than a single-transmitter, enabling broadcasters to fill gaps in service coverage. Each transmitter would broadcast the station’s DTV signal on the same channel, similar to analog TV booster stations but more efficiently. The major benefit offered by DTS is to afford over-the-air service in areas previously blocked by terrain.

In the *Second DTV Periodic Review Report and Order*, adopted in August 2004, the Commission approved the use of DTS and set guidelines for DTV stations’ interim use of the technology. The Commission also committed to undertake a rulemaking proceeding to adopt rules for DTS operations.

The *Clarification Order* adopted today reiterates that DTS transmitters operating on an interim basis must be located within the DTV station’s predicted noise-limited service contour, which is based on the station’s existing authorization.

The *Notice* proposes rules to govern the use of DTS as an alternative to single transmitter systems for digital television stations and seeks comment on how DTV receivers and converter boxes will work where stations use DTS. The proposed rules for DTS service would provide for stations to use DTS to serve currently authorized areas. They would also allow stations to apply to maximize their coverage using DTS once the current freeze on the filing of most DTV applications is lifted, generally allowing DTS service in an area that is comparable to the area they could cover with a single transmitter.

More specifically, the Commission addresses the following proposals in the *Notice*:

- Propose to afford primary regulatory status to the multiple transmitters used in DTS within the areas that the DTS transmitters are authorized to serve.
- Propose to maintain protections against “cherry-picking” established in the interim guidelines. Licensees using DTS technology would have to provide, at a minimum, essentially the same level of service they would use with their single-transmitter facilities.

