

Broadcast Planning Instruction

Title: Interference considerations for terrestrial off-air inputs used for retransmission of radio and television broadcasting services	
Instruction no: 10	Version release: 2
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Background

This Instruction provides clarification of the ACMA's policy in relation to protection, from interference, of terrestrial 'off-air' inputs at translator and repeater sites.

A translator (also referred to as a transposer) is a transmitting station designed to rebroadcast, on a separate channel, signals received off-air from a 'parent' radio or television broadcasting station. A repeater station is also a transmitting station but may rebroadcast, either on the same or on a separate channel, signals received off-air from the parent station¹. Translator and repeater stations can be used to extend, or to overcome signal deficiencies within, the coverage of the parent station.

Broadcasters and self-help retransmission licensees may seek to use off-air inputs at translator and repeater sites, in lieu of other program feed arrangements, in order to minimise implementation costs.

The use of off-air feeds can have significant implications for spectrum productivity. Off-air receivers associated with translator or repeater stations are typically located at elevated sites and often receive weak distant signals that are beyond the expected coverage of the parent broadcasting station. These factors, together with the high signal reliability required of input feeds, can place additional constraints on spectrum availability and usage.

Instruction

Given the potential impact on spectrum availability and the need to ensure efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum, the ACMA does not afford terrestrial off-air inputs at translator and repeater sites the right of protection from interference. Notwithstanding this position, where the ACMA is aware of the presence of an off-air feed², the frequency planning process will endeavour to avoid, subject to spectrum considerations, channel allotments that may interfere with the off-air input. However, for the reasons cited above, on-going protection of any off-air feed cannot be guaranteed.

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¹ Program distribution to repeater sites is also possible using other delivery mechanisms, for example landline, microwave link or satellite feed.

² The ACMA does not maintain a register of terrestrial off-air feeds in use at transmitter sites but relies, in part, on broadcasters to notify the presence of any off-air feed which may be affected by a proposed channel allotment.