



Alabama Broadcasters Association

Engineering Notebook

Review of Rules concerning tower painting and lighting



May 4th, 2013

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Quick Links

[EAS Monitoring Assignments](#)

[RMT schedule](#)

[SBE](#)

[Engineering Events](#)

FCC concerned over tower issues

The FCC continues to put a high priority on rules concerning tower painting and lighting. This is one of those areas that come under the "safety issues" of the Commission rules.

Basically any tower that exceeds 60.96 meters (200 feet) in height above the ground shall be painted and lighted in accordance with FCC and FAA standards.

There are several areas that seem to get the most attention....

1. Section 17.57 of the Rules requires owners of registered antenna structures to immediately notify the Commission, using FCC Form 854, upon any change in structure height or change in ownership information. When a station is sold or purchased the ownership listed on the Antenna

Structure

Registration (ASR) must be updated.

We suggest that you review the ASR for all towers owned by your company to make sure the information is correct.

2. Improper operation and monitoring of tower

lighting systems. Current rules (17.47) states that tower light operation should be observed once every 24 hours either visually or by a properly maintained indicator. However if a station maintains an automatic alarm system designed to detect any failure of such lights and to provide indication of such failure to the owner you are relieved from checking operation every 24 hours.

One area that receives a lot of attention from the Commission is the use of "non-station personnel" to observe the proper operation. If you have persons living around the tower to check the lights; you need to have a written contract with the individual as well as some type of "log" to record the observation. The FCC indicates that just having the individual call when there is an outage is not sufficient.

3. Notation of tower light malfunction should be posted in the "Station Log". While it

not required by FCC rules to record the daily observation of tower lights, we strongly recommend notating the time of inspection.

Stations are required to report immediately by telephone to the Flight Service Station any observed or otherwise known extinguishment or improper functioning of any flashing obstruction light, regardless of its position on the antenna structure, not corrected within 30 minutes.

An extinguishment or improper functioning of a steady burning side intermediate light or lights shall be corrected as soon as possible, but notification to the FAA of such extinguishment or improper functioning is not required.

4. Improper painting or maintenance of towers.

There are specific rules for towers that are required to be painted concerning the number of bands and the condition of the paint.

Towers from 200 feet to 700 feet are required to have 7 equally spaced bands.

Towers from 701 feet to 900 feet are required to have 9 equally spaced bands. From 901 to 1100 should have 11 bands and over that

**height 13
bands.**

**Towers should be repainted when
paint bands
have faded to a point that does not
meet FAA
standards.**

**Towers with high-intensity flashing
white lights (high-intensity strobes)
or medium-intensity
strobes do not have to paint towers.**

Larry Wilkins CPBE®
Alabama Broadcasters Association
334-303-2525