

Some Wireless Microphone Systems Must be Scrapped

The Federal Communications Commission has promulgated a new regulation requiring users of wireless microphones operating in the 700 MHz band (frequencies between 698 and 807 MHz) to stop operating those wireless microphone systems no later than June 12, 2010. The manufacturers of those devices never adequately informed purchasers of these systems that they were required to obtain an FCC license to operate in the 700 MHz band. Until last year, wireless microphones were sharing the 700 MHz band with television broadcasters, and no harmful interference resulted from that sharing. However, as part of the transition to digital television, last year broadcasters vacated channels 52 through 69, and that spectrum was licensed to commercial and public safety users. Wireless microphone systems which continue to operate in that spectrum will cause harmful interference with public safety communications, such as police, ambulances and fire departments, as well as commercial wireless broadband systems.

The largest manufacturers of wireless microphone systems, Shure, Sennheiser, Audio-Technica, and AKG are offering rebates to purchasers of their wireless microphones which used the 700 MHz band. The FCC decided that although wireless microphone users in the 700 MHz band had been violating FCC rules for years, it would not penalize those users, since they were not made aware of the improper use of the spectrum by the sellers of the wireless microphone systems.

See: www.fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones.

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