

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of )  
)  
Technical Requirements to Enable Blocking of ) ET Docket No. 97-206  
Video Programming Based on Program Ratings )  
)  
Implementation of Sections 551(c), (d), and (e) )  
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 )  
  
To: The Commission

**EXPEDITED PETITION FOR RULEMAKING**

The Consumer Electronics Association (“CEA”),<sup>1</sup> pursuant to Section 1.401 of the Commission’s Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.401, hereby respectfully submits this Petition for Rulemaking (“PFRM”) for the purpose of initiating a second phase in the above-captioned proceeding in order to specify V-chip requirements for digital television receivers.

**I. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEREST**

CEA, an independent trade association within the Electronics Industries Alliance (“EIA”), is the principal trade association of the consumer electronics industry. CEA members design, manufacture, distribute and sell a wide variety of consumer electronics equipment, including televisions, radios, computers, videocassette recorders, and digital versatile disc (“DVD”) players. CEA is proud of its record and the record of the consumer electronics industry in adding socially beneficial functionality to consumer electronic devices. CEA’s members

<sup>1</sup> The Consumer Electronics Association was formerly known as the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association.

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developed the program blocking technology commonly known as “V-chip” and are committed to making blocking technology available to parents in the most expeditious, technically viable, and consumer friendly manner possible.

CEA supports the Commission’s efforts to implement and encourage the use of V-chip technology. Most recently, CEA has coordinated and cooperated with the V-chip Task Force created by the Commission to monitor implementation of V-chip requirements and to promote the use of V-chip capabilities. CEA files this Petition for Rulemaking for the purpose of furthering the Commission’s implementation of the congressional V-chip mandate as the broadcasting medium enters the digital era.

**II. THE COMMISSION SHOULD INITIATE AN EXPEDITED RULEMAKING FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING RULES SPECIFYING THE V-CHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR DIGITAL TELEVISION RECEIVERS.**

In the *V-Chip Technical Order*,<sup>2</sup> the Commission required that digital television manufacturers include blocking technology on at least half of their receivers with a picture screen 13 inches or greater in size by July 1, 1999.<sup>3</sup> The remainder of these products is required to contain blocking technology by January 1, 2000.<sup>4</sup> To CEA’s knowledge, manufacturers have complied with the first of these requirements and expect to be able to comply with the second. As is discussed below, however, the nature of this compliance, is not necessarily based on digital technology. Until recently, manufacturers have lacked a standard for the blocking technology to be utilized in the digital receivers themselves. CEA/EIA has recently adopted such a standard,

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<sup>2</sup> *Technical Requirements to Enable Blocking of Video Programming Based on Program Ratings*, ET Docket No. 97-206, 13 FCC Rcd 11248 (1998).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 11258-59.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

EIA-766.<sup>5</sup> CEA requests that the Commission initiate a rulemaking in order to incorporate this standard by reference in Section 15.120 of its Rules.<sup>6</sup>

At the current time, manufacturers have no specific operational guidelines in Section 15.120 for digital receivers. Despite this uncertainty, they have complied with the Commission's V-chip requirements as applied to digital receivers as best as possible. Sub-section 15.120(d)(1) incorporates by reference EIA-744 and EIA-608, which constitute the standards for program ratings reception and blocking in analog receivers. Most digital receivers currently operate in a "hybrid" fashion and are capable of receiving analog transmissions. Analog ratings information is thus received by hybrid receivers and blocking can be implemented pursuant to sub-section 15.120(d)(1). Manufacturers have also begun to rely on the recently established EIA-766 standard (discussed below) and the EIA-708 standard that introduce a purely digital approach to the implementation of V-chip functionality.<sup>7</sup>

CEA requests that the Commission implement a second phase of ET Docket No. 97-206 in order to modify sub-section 15.120(d)(2) and apply the same treatment to EIA-766 and EIA-708 for digital receivers that is accorded EIA-744 and EIA-608 in sub-section 15.120(d)(1). EIA-766 augments the Advanced Television Systems Committee ("ATSC") Standard A/65, adopted in December 1997, which is the digital transmission standard for program rating information and constitutes the Program and System Information Protocol for Terrestrial Broadcast and Cable ("PSIP"). The predecessor standards development documents of ATSC

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<sup>5</sup> "U.S. Rating Region Table (RRT) and Content Advisory Descriptor for Transport of content Advisory Information using ATSC A/65 Program and System Information Protocol (PSIP)." A copy of EIA-766 is attached as an appendix to this petition.

<sup>6</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 15.120.

<sup>7</sup> EIA-708 is entitled "Digital Television (DTV) Closed Captioning." The current version is EIA-708-B.

A/65 were cited with approval in the *V-Chip Technical Order*. Adoption of a rule incorporating EIA-766 and EIA-708 would thus not only mirror the Commission's rule for analog receivers, but it would also complement the manner in which program ratings information will be digitally transmitted by broadcasters.

CEA requests that the Commission examine a phased-in approach to compliance with new rules for DTV V-chip receiver implementation. There are several reasons why a phased-in approach is appropriate. First, the EIA-766 is a new standard and many manufacturers need time to initiate design efforts on this new technology. Secondly, A/65 PSIP system implementation by broadcaster networks and affiliates has been delayed significantly (EIA 766 requires full A/65 implementation). Thirdly, manufacturer and broadcasters need time to design and fabricate silicon IC for this new technology. Finally, DTV V-chip test tapes, being generated by Sarnoff Corporation, are not yet available, to either broadcaster or TV manufacturers. In fact, a full suite of A/65 (PSIP) test tapes is not yet available. A/65 implementation is an extremely complex system involving both hardware and software implementation and systems testing of all components making up the standard, including V-chip (EIA-766). For these reasons, the proceeding that CEA requests should propose sufficient time (*i.e.*, thirty-six months) for manufacturers to come into full compliance with the new standard. In the meantime, manufacturers could remain subject to the current rule for purposes of the statutory requirements.

**III. PROGRAM BLOCKING CAPABILITIES SHOULD APPLY ONLY TO DTV RECEIVERS THAT ARE 7.8 INCHES OR GREATER IN HEIGHT, A MEASUREMENT COMPARABLE TO A 13-INCH ANALOG RECEIVER.**

CEA also requests that the Commission amend its V-chip rules to provide that V-chip requirements for digital television receivers apply only to DTV receivers that are 7.8 inches or greater in height. In the *V-Chip Technical Order*, the Commission required that all television receivers with picture screens 33 cm (13 inches) or larger, measured diagonally, be capable of providing blocking technology.<sup>8</sup> However, because digital television picture screens will be shaped differently than analog picture screens, it would be inappropriate to require program blocking capabilities to DTV receivers based on the receivers' diagonal measurement. Accordingly, CEA recommends that V-chip capability should be applied to DTV receivers based on vertical screen height, not screen area or diagonal measurement.

The Commission has recognized the size differential between analog and DTV receivers. In the *DTV Closed-Captioning NPRM*, the Commission observed that "because digital television picture screens will be shaped differently from analog picture screens, based on the FTC labeling requirements, similarly labeled DTV receivers and analog receivers may actually have overall picture areas of different sizes."<sup>9</sup> To illustrate, CEA points out that "13-inch" analog receivers have a screen size ratio of 4:3, resulting in a relatively square screen, while most comparable digital receivers will have a ratio of 16:9, resulting in a more rectangular shape.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, an

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<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 11258-59.

<sup>9</sup> *In the Matter of Closed Captioning Requirements for Digital Television Receivers*, ET Docket No. 99-254, Notice of Proposed Rule Making, FCC 99-180, at ¶ 9 (rel. July 15, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> The same point was made by CEA in the comments it filed in the DTV closed-captioning proceeding. *See* Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association Comments in ET Docket No. 99-254, at 5-7 (filed Oct. 18, 1999); Consumer Electronics Manufacturers (footnote continued on following page)

analog receiver marketed with a picture screen measuring “13 inches diagonal” will have a picture area of 81.12 square inches; on the other hand, a DTV receiver labeled “13 inches diagonal” will have a picture area of 72.18 square inches, a significant difference in total picture area.

In order to compensate for the screen shape differential, while still complying with the objectives of Section 551 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, CEA recommends that V-Chip requirements apply only to DTV receivers that are 7.8 inches or greater in height. CEA believes that this recommendation would remain consistent with the Act’s requirements, given that this measurement is comparable to a 13-inch, diagonally measured, analog receiver with a screen size ratio of 4:3.<sup>11</sup> Further, this requirement would be consistent with position that CEA and other parties urged the Commission to adopt in the DTV Closed-Captioning proceeding. Certainly, if the Commission were to adopt CEA’s recommendation with respect to DTV receiver size in that proceeding, the same standard should apply here to maintain consistency in the Commission’s rules.

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Association Reply Comments in ET Docket No. 99-254, at 5-6 (filed Nov. 15, 1999). *See also* Thomson Consumer Electronics Comments in ET Docket No. 99-254, at 13-14 (filed Oct. 18, 1999) (“[T]he ‘13-inches or larger’ diagonal measurement standard is not appropriate in the DTV context.” (emphasis in original)); Toshiba America Consumer Products Comments in ET Docket No. 99-254, at 1 (filed Oct. 18, 1999) (noting that a 13 inch, diagonally measured, analog receiver is comparable to a 7.8 inch, vertically measured, DTV receiver).

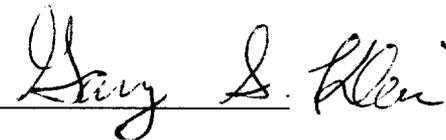
<sup>11</sup> A 4:3 ratio with 7.8” height equates to a 16” diagonal with a 16:9 ratio at the same height.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated in the foregoing, CEA urges the Commission to initiate an expedited rulemaking for the purpose of creating rules specifying the V-chip requirements for digital television receivers consistent with the proposals expressed by CEA herein.

Respectfully submitted,

**Consumer Electronics Association**

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November 24, 1999

## **FOREWORD**

This standard was developed under the auspices of the CEMA Engineering R-4.3 Television Data Systems Subcommittee.

(Except for this sentence, this page intentionally left blank.)

**U.S. Rating Region Table (RRT) and Content Advisory Descriptor for  
Transport of Content Advisory Information Using ATSC A/65  
Program and System Information Protocol (PSIP)**

## **1 Scope**

This standard augments ATSC Standard A/65 23 Dec 1997 and SCTE DVS-097 Rev. 7, 10 Nov 1997 which are identical and are both titled Program and System Information Protocol for Terrestrial Broadcast and Cable (PSIP). Along with the above two standards, this standard designates the RRT which provides the receiver with the definition of the rating system and the Content Advisory Descriptor which provides the receiver with the specific program rating for each program. Specifically, this standard specifies the exact syntax to be used to define the U.S. Rating Region Table (RRT) in accordance with Section 6.4 of A/65 as well as the exact syntax to be used in the Content Advisory Descriptors that convey the rating information for each program in accordance with Section 6.7.4 of A/65. Thus DTV receivers may block unwanted programs as determined by the user.

This standard does not indicate and is not meant to imply techniques or procedures for blocking at the DTV receiver (for example, remote control, other human interface devices, on-screen displays and/or graphical user interfaces).

## **2 Normative References**

The following standards contain provisions that, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards listed in 2.1.

### **2.1 Normative Reference List**

**ATSC A/65, Program and System Information Protocol for Terrestrial Broadcast and Cable (PSIP), 23 Dec 1997**

**SCTE DVS-097, Program and System Information Protocol for Terrestrial Broadcast and Cable (PSIP), Rev 7, 10 Nov 1997**

### **2.2 Normative Reference Acquisition**

The normative references listed in 2.1 may be acquired from the following sources:

#### **ATSC Standards:**

- Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC), 1750 K Street, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006, Phone 202-828-3130; Fax 202-828-3131; Internet <http://www.atsc.org>

#### **SCTE Standards:**

- Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (SCTE), 140 Philips Road, Exton, PA 19341-1318; Phone 800-542-5040; Fax 610-363-7133; Internet <http://www.scte.org>

### 3 Transmission Rate

See Section 7.1 of ATSC A/65 and SCTE DVS-097.

### 4 Rating Region Table Information

This section provides the additional information, beyond that provided in Section 6.4 of A/65, needed to complete the RRT for the U.S. Region (50 states + possessions). All fields in Table 6.10 of A/65 that are not specified hereinafter shall have values per A/65. All text fields in Table 6.10 shall be formatted in compliance with Table 6.24 of A/65 with **ISO\_639\_language\_code=** 0x656E67, **compression\_type=** 0x00, **mode=** 0x00, **number\_strings=**0x01, and **number segments=**0x01.

Syntax	Value
<b>rating_region</b>	0x01
<b>version_number</b>	00000
<b>rating_region_name_text()</b>	US (50 states + possessions)
<b>dimensions_defined</b>	0x08

See Table 1 for the instances of the contents of each dimension.

The top row is the **dimension\_name\_text()** = e.g., "MPAA". The number in () before the dimension name text is the number of the dimension in the "**dimensions\_defined**" loop. The contents of each dimension are enumerated in the columns.

**Graduated\_scale** is referred to as "grad"; The number in brackets [] is the number for the value in the "**values\_defined**" loop; and within that loop the semantic **abbrev\_rating\_value\_text()** (e.g., "PG", "D") is referred to as "abbrev"; and **rating\_value\_text()** (e.g., "Parental Guidance Suggested", "D"); is referred to as "value".

(0) Entire Audience	(1) Dialogue	(2) Language	(3) Sex	(4) Violence	(5) Children	(6) Fantasy Violence	(7) MPAA
grad = "1"	grad = "0"	grad = "0"	grad = "0"	grad = "0"	grad = "1"	grad = "0"	grad = "0"
[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "	[0] abbrev = " " value = " "
[1] abbrev = "None" value = "None"	[1] abbrev = "D" value = "D"	[1] abbrev = "L" value = "L"	[1] abbrev = "S" value = "S"	[1] abbrev = "V" value = "V"	[1] abbrev = "TV-Y" value = "TV-Y"	[1] abbrev = "FV" value = "FV"	[1] abbrev = "N/A" value = "MPAA Rating Not Applicable"
[2] abbrev = "TV-G" value = "TV-G"					[2] abbrev = "TV-Y7" value = "TV-Y7"		[2] abbrev = "G" value = "Suitable for All Ages"
[3] abbrev = "TV-PG" value = "TV-PG"							[3] abbrev = "PG" value = "Parental Guidance Suggested"
[4] abbrev = "TV-14" value = "TV-14"							[4] abbrev = "PG-13" value = "Parents Strongly Cautioned"
[5] abbrev = "TV-MA" value = "TV-MA"							[5] abbrev = "R" value = "Restricted, under 17 must be accompanied by adult"
							[6] abbrev = "NC-17" value = "No One 17 and Under Admitted"
							[7] abbrev = "X" value = "No One 17 and Under Admitted"
							[8] abbrev = "NR" value = "Not Rated by MPAA"

Note: Numbers in parenthesis denote rated dimension indices. Numbers in square brackets denote rated value entry indices. These indices are used in the **content\_advisory\_descriptor** to specify the dimension and rating value instances assigned to each program. See ATSC A/65 Section 6.7.4 and SCTE DVS/097 Section 6.7.4.

**Table 1 Rating Region Table Information**

\* No blocking is intended per the program rating criteria.

## 5 Content Advisory Descriptor

This Section provides the additional information beyond that provided in Section 6.7.4 of A/65 to define the allowed Content Advisory Descriptors. All fields in Table 6.18 of A/65, not specified hereinafter, shall have values per A/65.

Syntax	Value
<b>rating_region</b>	0x01
<b>rated_dimensions</b>	This field may have a value from 0x01 to 0x08 depending on the number of dimensions that apply to the rating of this program.
<b>rating_dimension</b>	This field may have a value from 0x00 to 0x07 to signify one of the 8 rating dimensions defined for the U.S. Rating System.
<b>rating_value</b>	This field will indicate the value assigned to the dimension in accordance with the rating of the program. Only certain combinations of dimensions and values are allowed. See the discussion below.
<b>rating_description_length</b>	0x00
<b>rating_description_text( )</b>	None

According to A/65, the program rating is conveyed from the broadcaster to the receiver by the Content Advisory Descriptor, specifically through rating dimensions having appropriate values. This is exactly analogous to the contents of the XDS packet defined in EIA-744. There are 54 possible messages defined by EIA-744 and this standard defines 54 identical messages to be conveyed by the Content Advisory Descriptor. Table 2 lists the 54 messages. The entries in Table 2 show the values of each of the 8 defined dimensions for each of the 54 allowed messages. No other combinations of rating dimension and rating value are allowed.

### Dimensions Defined:

- "0" TV Parental Guideline Age-Based Rating for Entire Audience
- "1" Dialog Flag
- "2" Language Flag
- "3" Sexual Content Flag
- "4" Violence Flag
- "5" TV Parental Guideline Age-Based Rating for Children's Programs
- "6" Fantasy Violence Flag
- "7" MPAA Rating

Note: Where "X" appears in Table 2, it means the dimension shall not be present in the descriptor. Where "0" appears in Table 2, the dimension should be omitted from the descriptor.

MESSAGE	Dimension	CONTENT ADVISORY DESCRIPTOR							
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No Message		DESCRIPTOR NOT PRESENT							
TV - None		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - Y		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	X
TV - Y7		0	0	0	0	0	2	0	X
TV - Y7 - FV		0	0	0	0	0	2	1	X
TV - G		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - PG		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - D		3	1	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - L		3	0	1	0	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - S		3	0	0	1	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - V		3	0	0	0	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - L		3	1	1	0	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - S		3	1	0	1	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - V		3	1	0	0	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - L - S		3	0	1	1	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - L - V		3	0	1	0	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - S - V		3	0	0	1	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - L - S		3	1	1	1	0	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - L - V		3	1	1	0	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - S - V		3	1	0	1	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - L - S - V		3	0	1	1	1	0	0	X
TV - PG - D - L - S - V		3	1	1	1	1	0	0	X
TV - 14		4	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D		4	1	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - L		4	0	1	0	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - S		4	0	0	1	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - V		4	0	0	0	1	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D - L		4	1	1	0	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D - S		4	1	0	1	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D - V		4	1	0	0	1	0	0	X
TV - 14 - L - S		4	0	1	1	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - L - V		4	0	1	0	1	0	0	X
TV - 14 - S - V		4	0	0	1	1	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D - L - S		4	1	1	1	0	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D - L - V		4	1	1	0	1	0	0	X

Table 2 Allowed Rating Messages

MESSAGE	Dimension	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TV - 14 - D - S - V		4	1	0	1	1	0	0	X
TV - 14 - L - S - V		4	0	1	1	1	0	0	X
TV - 14 - D - L - S - V		4	1	1	1	1	0	0	X
TV - MA		5	0	0	0	0	0	0	X
TV - MA - L		5	0	1	0	0	0	0	X
TV - MA - S		5	0	0	1	0	0	0	X
TV - MA - V		5	0	0	0	1	0	0	X
TV - MA - L - S		5	0	1	1	0	0	0	X
TV - MA - L - V		5	0	1	0	1	0	0	X
TV - MA - S - V		5	0	0	1	1	0	0	X
TV - MA - L - S - V		5	0	1	1	1	0	0	X
MPAA - N/A		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1
MPAA - G		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2
MPAA - PG		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	3
MPAA - PG13		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	4
MPAA - R		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5
MPAA - NC-17		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
MPAA - X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
MPAA - Not Rated		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8

Table 2 Allowed Rating Messages (Continued)

Definition of symbols for Table 2 (informative):

- FV** - Fantasy Violence
- D** - Sexually Suggestive Dialog
- L** - Adult Language
- S** - Sexual Situations
- V** - Violence

**TV-Y All Children.** *This program is designed to be appropriate for all children. Whether animated or live-action, the themes and elements in this program are specifically designed for a very young audience, including children from ages 2-6. This program is not expected to frighten younger children.*

**TV-Y7 Directed to Older Children.** *This program is designed for children age 7 and above. It may be more appropriate for children who have acquired the developmental skills needed to distinguish between make-believe and reality. Themes and elements in this program may include mild fantasy violence or comedic violence, or may frighten children under the age of 7. Therefore, parents may wish to consider the suitability of this program for their very young children. Note: For those programs where fantasy violence may be more intense or more combative than other programs in this category, such programs will be designated **TV-Y7-FV**.*

**The following categories apply to programs designed for the entire audience:**

**TV-G General Audience.** *Most parents would find this program suitable for all ages. Although this rating does not signify a program designed specifically for children, most parents may let younger children watch this program unattended. It contains little or no violence, no strong language and little or no sexual dialogue or situations.*

**TV-PG Parental Guidance Suggested.** *This program contains material that parents may find unsuitable for younger children. Many parents may want to watch it with their younger children. The theme itself may call for parental guidance and/or the program contains one or more of the following: moderate violence (V), some sexual situations (S), infrequent coarse language (L), or some suggestive dialogue (D).*

**TV-14 Parents Strongly Cautioned.** *This program contains some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age. Parents are strongly urged to exercise greater care in monitoring this program and are cautioned against letting children under the age of 14 watch unattended. This program contains one or more of the following: intense violence (V), intense sexual situations (S), strong coarse language (L), or intensely suggestive dialogue (D).*

**TV-MA Mature Audience Only.** *This program is specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children under 17. This program contains one or more of the following: graphic violence (V), explicit sexual activity (S), or crude indecent language (L).*

All program content analysis is the function of parties involved in program production or distribution. No precise criteria for establishing content ratings or advisories are given or implied in this section. The characters are provided for the convenience of consumers in the implementation of a parental viewing control system.

The contents of the Content Advisory Descriptor shall not change during the course of a program, which shall be construed to include program segments, commercials, promotions, station identifications, etc.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- EIA CEB1, **Recommended Practice for Program Ratings and Content Advisories**, Global Engineering Documents, World Headquarters, 15 Inverness Way East, Englewood, CO USA 80112-5776; Phone 800-854-7179; Fax 303-397-2740; Internet <http://global.ihs.com>; Email: [global@ihs.com](mailto:global@ihs.com)
- FCC Report and Order 98-36, Technical Requirements to Enable Blocking of Video Programming based on Program Ratings, ET Docket No. 97-206, released 3/13/98, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20401; Internet [http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Engineering\\_Technology/Orders/1998/fcc98036.html](http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Engineering_Technology/Orders/1998/fcc98036.html)

## Annex A (Informative)

This annex is an informative copy of FCC Rules Section 15.120

### Section 15.120 Program blocking technology requirements for television receivers.

- (a) Effective July 1, 1999, manufacturers of television broadcast receivers as defined in Section 15.3(w) of this chapter, including personal computer systems meeting that definition, must ensure that one-half of their product models with picture screens 33 cm (13 in) or larger in diameter shipped in interstate commerce or manufactured in the United States complies with the provision of paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of this section.

NOTE: This paragraph places no restrictions on the shipping or sale of television receivers that were manufactured before July, 1999.

- (b) Effective January 1, 2000, all TV broadcast receivers as defined in Section 15.3(w) of this chapter, including personal computer systems meeting that definition, with picture screens 33 cm (13 in) or larger in diameter shipped in interstate commerce or manufactured in the United States shall comply with the provisions of paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of this section.

#### (c) Transmission Format.

- (1) Analog television program rating information shall be transmitted on line 21 of field 2 of the vertical blanking interval of television signals, in accordance with § 73.682(a)(22) of this chapter.
- (2) [Reserved]

#### (d) Operation.

- (1) Analog television receivers will receive program ratings transmitted pursuant to industry standard EIA-744 "Transport of Content Advisory Information Using Extended Data Service (XDS)" and EIA-608 "Recommended Practice for Line 21 Data Service". This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 522(a) and 1 CFR Part 51. Blocking of programming shall occur when a program rating is received that meets the pre-determined user requirements. Copies of EIA-744 and EIA-608 may be obtained from: Global Engineering Documents, 15 Inverness Way East, Englewood, Co 80112-5704. Copies of EIA-744 may be inspected during normal business hours at the following locations: Federal Communications Commission, 2000 M Street, NW, Technical Information Center (Suite 230), Washington, DC, or the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, suite 700 Washington, DC.
- (2) Digital television receivers shall react in a similar manner as analog televisions when programmed to block specific rating categories.

- (e) All television receivers as described in paragraph (a) of this section shall block programming as follows:

- (1) Channel Blocking. Channel Blocking should occur as soon as a program rating packet with the appropriate Content Advisory or MPAA rating level is received. Program blocking is described as a receiver performing all of the following:

Muting the program audio  
Rendering the video black or otherwise indecipherable  
Eliminating program-related captions

- (2) Default State. The default state of a receiver (i.e., as provided to the consumer) should not block unrated programs. However, it is permissible to include features that allow the user to reprogram the receiver to block programs that are not rated.
- (3) Picture-In-Picture (PIP). If a receiver has the ability to decode program-related rating information for the Picture-In-Picture (PIP) video signal, then it should block the PIP channel in the same manner as the main channel. If the receiver does not have the ability to decode PIP program-related rating information, then it should block or otherwise disable the PIP if the viewer has enabled program blocking.
- (4) Selection of Ratings. Each television receiver, in accordance with user input, shall block programming based on the age based ratings, the content based ratings, or a combination of the two.
  - (i) If the user chooses to block programming according to its age based rating level, the receiver must have the ability to automatically block programs with a more restrictive age based rating. For example, if all shows with an age-based rating of TV-PG have been selected for blocking, the user should be able to automatically block programs with the more restrictive ratings of TV-14 and TV-MA.
  - (ii) If the user chooses to block programming according to a combination of age based and content based ratings the receiver must have the ability to automatically block programming with a more restrictive age rating but a similar content rating. For example, if all shows rated TV-PG-V have been selected for blocking, the user should be able to block automatically shows with the more restrictive ratings of TV-14-V and TV-MA-V.
  - (iii) The user should have the capability of overriding the automatic blocking described in paragraphs (4)(i) and (4)(ii) of this section.