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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20054
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of

A Petition to change Part 97.113(e))
of the Commission's Rules to permit)
retransmission of manned spacecraft)
communications from International)
Space Station in addition to Space)
Shuttle)



To: The Commission

Petition for Rulemaking
by

NASA John H. Glenn Research Center Amateur Radio Club

Introduction

The NASA John H. Glenn Research Center Amateur Radio Club ("Club"), like amateur radio clubs at other NASA centers, has been retransmitting on amateur radio frequencies the publicly available Space Shuttle communications during shuttle missions. We have done so ever since the beginning of that period permitted by FCC regulations Part 97 Sec. 113(e).

Space-to-ground communications from Space Shuttles are publicly available from U.S. Government sources via the World Wide Web and on the NASA SELECT cable channel ("publicly available"). The Club also recognizes that amateur radio communications have already commenced between other ground-based amateur radio stations and the International Space Station. Amateur radio communications with the Shuttle have been demonstrated for educators and public school children from time-to-time via SAREX radio (Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment). Most recently communications have occurred between International Space Station and ground-based amateur radio stations via ARISS (Amateur Radio on International Space Station) and can occur even in the absence of an orbiting Space Shuttle.

Discussion

The beginning of manned occupation of International Space Station has introduced a technicality into the issue of the definition of "space shuttle" communications as presently defined in Sec. 97.113(e). The Club members feel that a wording change is in order to

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correct this new technical deficiency in the wording. The Club is concerned that by retransmitting "International Space Station" audio on amateur radio frequencies we might be operating in technical violation of the rules, although we believe we are still operating within the commonly-understood spirit of the rules.

Proposal

Accordingly, the Club requests a rule change to provide the equivalent level of freedom to retransmit publicly available radio communications from any manned spacecraft in the future, by incorporation of a simple wording change to Sec. 97.113(e) that will carry indefinitely into the future. The specific rule wording change requested by the Club is contained in Appendix A.

In order not to burden the Commission, the Club respectfully asks that the Commission holds this Petition until such time as any other Part 97 rewrites occur.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn L. Williams
Secretary
NASA Glenn Research Center Amateur Radio Club
(216) 433-2389

for:

NASA Glenn Research Center Amateur Radio Club
Mail Stop 8-1
21000 Brookpark Road,
Cleveland, Ohio 44135-3191
(216) 433-2389 FAX: (216) 433-6382 email: Glenn.Williams@grc.nasa.gov

Officers:


Philip A. Stehno, KB8UNB
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Vice President

Glenn L. Williams, AF8C
Secretary

Concurrence:


Charles E. Sommer, Jr., N4OSD

April 12, 2001

Appendix A

Specific rule changes requested by the Club appear in italics in the second paragraph below.

FROM

Sec. 97.113 (e)

No station shall retransmit programs or signals emanating from any type of radio station other than an amateur station, except propagation and weather forecast information intended for use by the general public and originated from United States Government stations and communications, including incidental music, originating on United States Government frequencies between a space shuttle and its associated Earth stations. Prior approval for shuttle retransmissions must be obtained from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Such retransmissions must be for the exclusive use of amateur operators. Propagation, weather forecasts, and shuttle retransmissions may not be conducted on a regular basis, but only occasionally, as an incident of normal amateur radio communications.

TO

Sec. 97.113 (e) - suggested revision in italics

No station shall retransmit programs or signals emanating from any type of radio station other than an amateur station, except propagation and weather forecast information intended for use by the general public and originated from United States Government stations and communications, including incidental music, originating on United States Government frequencies between a space shuttle *or other manned spacecraft** and its associated Earth stations. Prior approval for shuttle retransmissions must be obtained from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Such retransmissions must be for the exclusive use of amateur operators. Propagation, weather forecasts, and shuttle retransmissions may not be conducted on a regular basis, but only occasionally, as an incident of normal amateur radio communications.

* "*or other manned spacecraft*" or "*or International Space Station*" are suggested alternate choices of wording depending on the Commission's judgement.