

[Recent Flurry of FCC Enforcement Actions Reminds Stations to Check Public Inspection Files and Take Annual Equipment Measurements](#)

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The FCC has issued a flurry of fines against broadcast stations in the past week or two. While a number of these fines were for the operation of unlicensed pirate radio stations, several of the fines were for public inspection file violations, stations broadcasting with excessive power or failing to reduce power at nighttime, or for other technical violations. Agents from the Commission's field offices have been busy visiting stations, and licensees are urged to heed these recent forfeiture actions and review their own operations to ensure compliance with the Commission's rules, starting with the main studio rules and public inspection file requirements, about which we've written often in the past. (See [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), for example.)

While the main studio and public inspection file requirements seem basic, the failure to properly follow these rules can be quite costly. Today's FCC releases carries news of two such fines, **one for \$24,000 and one for \$25,000**. In the first case involving two AM stations, the Commission fined the licensee \$12,000 per station for failing to maintain a local public inspection file. A copy of the decision is available [here](#). The FCC increased the forfeiture from the base fine of \$10,000 based on its finding of violations at other stations operated by the licensee, which in the FCC's view may indicate a "systemic compliance issue". In the second case, available [here](#), the Commission fined two other AM stations operated by the same licensee a total of \$25,000 for public inspection file violations, failure to operate consistent with the terms of the station's license, and failure to make required annual measurements.

Of particular note, one of the **AM stations had failed to conduct the required annual equipment performance measurements**, and had failed to switch from its authorized Daytime pattern to its authorized Nighttime directional pattern during the month of April. Section 73.1590(a)(6) of the Commission's rules requires that **AM stations make annual equipment performance measurements**, and that the details of those measurements be kept on file at the transmitter or remote control point for two years and be made available to the FCC upon request. These measurements ensure that the station and transmitter are operating properly and are not causing any spurious or harmonic emissions, and must be conducted every year with no more than 14 months

between measurements. In the case issued today, the station had no record of the measurements and had apparently not conducted the annual equipment performance measurements.

These fines should be a clear warning to broadcast stations -- particularly AM stations -- to review their operations and ensure that they are in compliance with the Commission's rules and their authorized parameters. And AM stations should make sure to make their annual equipment performance measurements and retain the proper documentation in their files.

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