



Virginia Association of Broadcasters Legal Review



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Legal Memorandum

Time Is Running Out!

All Stations Must File 2017 Biennial Ownership Reports by March 2

As we have previously reported, all broadcast stations must file their 2017 Biennial Ownership Reports by March 2, 2018 (with a currency—or “as of”—date of October 1, 2017).

For the first time, stations must file their ownership reports (Form 323 for commercial stations; Form 323-E for noncommercial stations) in the FCC’s LMS (Licensing and Management System) platform. The LMS interface and versions of the Form 323 and Form 323-E are different from the FCC’s CDBS platform in which stations used to file ownership reports. Stations may wish to watch the archived video of the FCC’s tutorial webcast about use of the LMS platform to complete the ownership reporting process. The tutorial webcast provides important information about the process and engages in a demonstration of how to access, complete, and submit the new ownership reporting forms in the FCC’s LMS platform. The archived tutorial is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/media/ownership-report-commercial-broadcast-station-form-323>. Also available at the same link are FAQs for commercial and noncommercial biennial report filers.

Also for the first time, each noncommercial station will be required to provide (i) an FRN (FCC Registration Number) for all members of its governing board and (ii) demographic information about the members of its governing board (i.e., gender, race, and ethnicity information). Thus, for noncommercial stations, not only will the filing system and process be different than in past years, but the information required to be reported will be different than for past ownership reporting filings.

Stations that file their own ownership reports will almost certainly have questions about the new forms, filing system, and procedure. Those questions might be answered by the FCC’s tutorial and/or FAQs referenced above. If not, consultation with legal counsel may be in order. But, time is running out because biennial ownership reports are due by March 2, 2018.

If you have any questions concerning the information discussed in this memorandum, please contact your communications counsel or any of the undersigned.

Stephen Hartzell, Editor

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