



Aviation Group Client Update

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NEW FCC RULES ALLOW FOR FASTER AIRCRAFT INTERNET LICENSING

On [December 28, 2012](#), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it had adopted rules to speed the deployment of Internet services onboard commercial and private aircraft.

Since 2001, FCC licensed companies on an *ad hoc* basis to operate Earth Stations Aboard Aircraft (ESAA) to communicate with Fixed-Satellite Service (FSS) geostationary-orbit (GSO) space stations operating in the 10.95-11.2 GHz, 11.45-11.7 GHz, 11.7-12.2 GHz (space-to-Earth or downlink) and 14.0-14.5 GHz (Earth-to-space or uplink) frequency bands to provide wireless connectivity to airborne aircraft. Satellite antennas mounted on the exterior of the aircraft provided two-way in-flight broadband services to passengers and flight crew.

The FCC's [Report and Order](#) formalizes the ESAA as a license application in the FSS and establishes a framework for processing licenses. There are currently two mobile applications in the FSS: Earth Stations on board Vessels (ESV) and Vehicle-Mounted Earth Stations (VMES), which provide satellite communications with vessels and land vehicles respectively. ESAA is the "third leg" of mobile applications in the FSS. As a result, aircraft operators may now test their systems to establish that they meet FCC standards, show that they do not interfere with any aircraft systems, and obtain FCC approval.

The FCC estimates that the new rules will allow it to process ESAA license applications up to 50 percent faster. The text of the new rules is found in 47 CFR parts 2 and 25.

If you have any questions or would like further information regarding the FCC's action, please contact our office.

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