

FCC Rules for Frequency Coordination of Amateur Radio Repeaters

FCC Part 97 rules for frequency coordination focus on ensuring effective use of amateur radio frequencies and preventing interference, particularly between repeaters. While Part 97 doesn't mandate a specific, centrally controlled coordination system, it encourages cooperation and good engineering practices.

FCC Definition of a *Frequency Coordinator*:

An entity, recognized in a local or regional area by amateur operators whose stations are eligible to be auxiliary or repeater stations, that recommends transmit/receive channels and associated operating and technical parameters for such stations in order to avoid or minimize potential interference.

Key aspects:

1. Cooperation and Effective Use:

- Amateur operators are encouraged to cooperate in selecting transmitting channels and using frequencies effectively.
- No frequency assignments are made exclusively for individual stations.
- Good engineering and amateur practice are expected in all aspects not explicitly covered by the FCC rules.

2. Priority for Emergency Communications:

- Control operators must prioritize stations providing emergency communications on all frequencies.

3. Avoiding Interference:

- Amateur operators are prohibited from willfully or maliciously interfering with or causing interference to other radio communications or signals.

4. Repeater Operation:

- Repeaters are allowed to receive and retransmit on specified frequency bands, but must avoid interfering with other amateur operations.
- Coordination is crucial for repeaters to ensure they don't interfere with each other or other stations in the same area.

5. Coordination Guidelines (non-mandated by FCC):

- Frequency coordinators, often amateur radio operators themselves, are used to help manage repeater operations and coordinate frequency use.
- Frequency Coordination's are not transferable and are not the property of the holder.
- If a repeater moves, a new application for coordination must be made to the coordinator.
- In the event of a repeater sale, the coordination has a pending status until the holder relinquishes coordination, and the new holder agrees to the coordination parameters.

6. Elaboration:

- **General Standard:**

Part 97.101(a) mandates that amateur stations operate in accordance with good engineering and good amateur practice, which includes coordinating frequency use.

- **Shared Use:**

The FCC prioritizes shared use of frequencies within the amateur service, meaning no station has exclusive rights to a specific frequency.

- **Cooperation:**

Amateur operators are encouraged to cooperate in selecting frequencies and operating parameters to minimize interference.

- **Interference Mitigation:**

Licensees are expected to address interference by monitoring communications, implementing necessary technical measures, and cooperating with other licensees to resolve issues.

- **Frequency Coordinators:**

While not explicitly defined in Part 97, local or regional frequency coordinators often play a role in recommending transmit/receive frequencies and operating parameters for amateur stations to avoid interference.

- **Fees for Frequency Coordination**

Part 97 sets the stage for amateur radio operations, emphasizing cooperation in channel selection and the avoidance of interference. It doesn't mandate fee collection for frequency coordination, leaving the responsibility for cost allocation to the individual amateur operators.

7. Important Considerations:

- **Local and Regional Groups:**

Amateur operators may form local or regional groups that provide frequency coordination services and may charge fees for those services.

- **Community Standards:**

Local amateur radio clubs or groups may establish their own guidelines and fee structures for frequency coordination.

- **No FCC Enforcement:**

The FCC doesn't enforce any specific fee structures for frequency coordination services.

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8. Frequency Band Plans:

Amateur radio operators often adhere to band plans, which are guidelines developed by groups of amateur radio operators for selecting frequencies and operating parameters in specific frequency bands.

Summary:

In essence, FCC Part 97 doesn't have a single, specific rule solely dedicated to frequency coordination. Rather it establishes the framework for amateur radio operation, emphasizing cooperation, by the shared use of frequencies within the amateur service. This, with a focus on effective use of frequencies, and the avoidance of interference. While not dictating a specific centralized coordination system, it encourages the development and utilization of frequency coordination practices to ensure smooth and efficient operation of repeaters and other amateur stations. Section 97.101(b) states that each licensee and control operator must cooperate in selecting transmitting channels and making effective use of the frequencies, and that no frequency will be assigned for the exclusive use of any station.