

ABIP – COMMON DEFICIENCIES Aug. 2019
By Dick S. Pickens, TAB/FCC ABIP Inspector

Station logs aren't complete /chief operator has not approved them

FCC rules require the designated chief operator (or his/her designee) to review the station logs after each 7-day period to determine if all EAS tests were received/transmitted as required. Any omissions should be researched and explained. EAS logs are not the only Station Logs the Chief Operator is responsible for. Any logging of transmitter remote readings should also be reviewed for compliance with rules. If the station owns the tower, the logging of tower lights should also be included. The Chief Operator must review, sign (not initial), and date the review weekly under *FCC 73.1870(c)(3)*. To make this approval obvious, I recommend that the station log form contain a line such as:

“I have inspected these logs and certify that the station was operating in accordance with the station authorization and with applicable FCC Rules and Regulations. Any exceptions or comments are noted below”

Signature of Chief Operator or Designee	Date of Approval	Comments
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Tower light alarm test during each calendar quarter

If the licensee owns a painted, lighted tower, an operator must check the nighttime tower lights once every 24 hours either visually or by a remote sensor. If the tower has daytime strobes, these must also be observed during daylight hours. If the station relies on a tower light alarm system instead of performing the check, an operator must test the alarm system at least once during each calendar quarter to confirm its operation. An alarm test may require a test mode switch in the controller box or deactivation of at least one tower lamp during each mode of operation. If a station leases space on a lighted tower such tests are the responsibility of the tower owner. (It is wise to confirm periodically that such tests are being done.) [*FCC 17.47 & 17.49*]

No equipment performance measurements

Whenever a new transmitter is installed or antenna/coaxial modifications, the FCC requires such performance measurements be available for two years. Of course, it is wise to keep any such important records in a station's possession for as long as the station uses that equipment. [*See FCC 73.1590*]

No “Schedule of Maintenance and Calibrations”

A posted schedule is recommended for each transmitter location, with appropriate logging of each such activity as performed. Maintenance logs should be kept at each transmitter site as repairs and other services are conducted. These become a part of the official Station Log. Regular maintenance posted schedule is wise. Be certain station maintenance logs are available. Don't let the contract engineer just keep notes in their computer without giving your station a printout. [*73.1350(c)*]

FAA phone number not available to engineers and operators

The 800 number for notifying of light failures (877-487-6867) must be available, preferably posted at the control point and at the transmitter. Better yet, print it on the Station Log form. (*See FCC 17.48*)

No “List of Contracts” in the Public File

The FCC requires a list of certain licensee contracts to be uploaded to the station's FCC Public File. The list must include date of execution and expiration of each contract. If any future changes occur in the details of a contract, the list must be updated. Upon request, a copy of any current actual contract must be provided within 7 days. This uploading requirement was emphasized in an FCC notice in March of 2019. [*see FCC 73.3613(a)-(c); 73.3536(e)(5)*]

No “Link” to FCC Public File

There must be a link to the station's FCC Public File from the homepage of the station's website. [*73.3526(b)(2)(ii)*]

Donor Lists

Non-commercial stations must include a donor list in their public file. This list should only include donors who underwrite a specific program. This list should be kept for two years. [73.3527(e)(9)]

Receptionist and/or other staff not aware of public file procedures

If anyone inquires, the station's receptionist and telephone staff should be aware that the Public File is online and be prepared to give instructions about accessing it. We suggest a notice or handout at the receptionist desk instructing employees how to respond to such a request. If the visitor is not computer-literate a staff member should offer to guide them through it. It is also suggested that staff members review the Self-Inspection Checklist for other guidance and to consult with legal counsel for formats and advice. [FCC 73.3526(b)(2)(ii) & 73.3527(b)(2)(iii)]

No Legal ID

In earlier times, the legal ID requirement (call letters and city of license) were delivered by live announcers who knew to make the announcement. Program logs were required to list it as near as possible to the top of the hour at a natural break in the programming. For most stations these days it is an audio (or video for TV) file on a computer program. Increasingly these station identifications are missed because (among other reasons) it is (a) mis-logged or not logged (b) the file is mis-labelled, airing a "promo" or "branding" instead of a legal ID or (c) ignorance of the FCC requirement. In some cases, the ID is supposed to be inserted by a regional or national "hub" which oversees the station's operation. But the station will not escape an FCC fine by giving any of these excuses. The Chief Operator should monitor periodically to be certain a proper legal IDs is being aired regularly. [73.1201]

EAS monitoring and logging

Last but not least, stations must log certain EAS tests that are required by the TEXAS EAS PLAN:

1. FEMA's weekly CAP TEST (also known as IPAWS) - a weekly digitally delivered test by Internet. CAP refers to "Common Alerting Protocol". IPAWS is an acronym for the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System". In Texas it normally arrives on Monday mornings at 11:00 AM central time. El Paso also receives a second CAP test for New Mexico and should log both.
2. NOAA Weather Radio RWT (Required Weekly Test) – normally on Wednesday at about 11AM central time.
3. REQUIRED MONTHLY TESTS (RMT) -The TAB website contains a schedule of when these are expected each month for Texas stations.
4. REQUIRED WEEKLY TESTS (RWT) – Station is expected to originate (and log) one such test weekly and to receive (and log) at least one such test from a local primary station (LP1 or LP2) as well as the NOAA test.

Other recent concerns include:

- Posting the Chief Operator designation (it can be uploaded to the FCC Public File – other documents)
- Notification to the FCC of main studio or office address change
- Not having current copy of the FCC License (a renewal card is NOT a license but is only an extension of the license term)
- Power not within official minimum and maximum limits; If the station's authorized transmitter output power is not stated on the license, the station should have a copy of its most recent Form 301 application which stated the proposed TPO
- No Maintenance/Calibrations / Inspection logs available
- No available collection of reviewed and approved station logs for most recent two years [73.782]
- Towers with externally affixed coaxial cables that are not painted in the adjacent colors of the tower. [FAA Circular Number 70/7460-1J]

ABIP inspectors are not attorneys and our recommendations should not be construed to be legal advice. For reliable, specific interpretations of FCC Rules and Regulations, contact your FCC legal consultant.