



## Engineering Services

### **Understanding the requirements of a Broadcast Station "Chief Operator"**

The following information outlines the requirements and duties of a broadcast station Chief Operator. Basically, all broadcast operations must have a person that is designated as the Chief Operator (CO). There must also be an alternate CO to handle the duties when the CO is not available.

A document must be kept in the station files, listing the main and alternate Chief Operator. This document must be signed and dated by the station general manager or someone in a top managerial position. This document can be posted or placed in the online public file "additional documents" folder.

The Chief Operator duties requires reviewing the "Station Log" *weekly* to verify that the required entries are being made correctly. If there are any discrepancies, the CO must bring that to attention of the responsible department personnel.

The Chief Operator does not have to be the station engineer but must have the necessary knowledge to determine if the station's technical operation is in compliance with the FCC rules and terms of the station authorization.

There are three (3) areas of information that must be included in the Station Log.

1. Information concerning Emergency Alerting System (EAS) operation
2. Information concerning any major failure of a tower light system
3. Information concerning any major failure or calibration of equipment used as part of the station RF transmission system

Once the review has been completed the chief operator or his designee must date and sign the log, initiate any corrective action which may be necessary, and advise the station licensee of any condition which is repetitive. The station log must be retained for a period of two (2) years. It made be kept in written form or electronically and must be made available to an FCC inspector or an alternate inspector designated by the state broadcasters associations Alternative Broadcast Inspection Program (ABIP).

## **FCC Rules and Regulations part 73.1870 states:**

(a) The licensee of each AM, FM, TV or Class A TV broadcast station must designate a person to serve as the station's chief operator. At times when the chief operator is unavailable or unable to act (e.g., vacations, sickness), the licensee shall designate another person as the acting chief operator on a temporary basis.

(b) Chief operators shall be employed or serve on the following basis:

(1) The chief operator for an AM station using a directional antenna or operating with greater than 10 kW authorized power, or of a TV station is to be an employee of the station on duty for whatever number of hours each week the station licensee determines is necessary to keep the station's technical operation in compliance with FCC rules and the terms of the station authorization.

(2) Chief operators for non-directional AM stations operating with authorized powers not exceeding 10 kW and FM stations may be either an employee of the station or engaged to serve on a contract basis for whatever number of hours each week the licensee determines is necessary to keep the station's technical operation in compliance with the FCC rules and terms of the station authorization.

(3) The designation of the chief operator must be in writing. Agreements with chief operators serving on a contract basis must be in writing with a copy kept in the station files.

(c) The chief operator is responsible for completion of the following duties specified in this paragraph below. When these duties are delegated to other persons, the chief operator shall maintain supervisory oversight sufficient to know that each requirement has been fulfilled in a timely and correct manner.

(1) Inspections and calibrations of the transmission system, required monitors, metering and control systems; and any necessary repairs or adjustments where indicated. (See § 73.1580.)

(2) Periodic AM field monitoring point measurements, equipment performance measurements, or other tests as specified in the rules or terms of the station license.

(3) Review of the station records at least once each week to determine if required entries are being made correctly. Additionally, verification must be made that the station has been operated as required by the rules or the station authorization. Upon completion of the review, the chief operator or his designee must date and sign the log, initiate any corrective action which may be necessary, and advise the station licensee of any condition which is repetitive.