



September 14, 2005

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Ex Parte* Presentation in WT Docket No. 01-309 Section 68.4(a) of the
Commission's Rules Governing Hearing Aid Compatible Telephones

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On September 12, 2005, representatives from the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions ("ATIS") Incubator Solutions Program 4 dealing with Hearing Aid Compatibility issues ("AISP.4" or "HAC Incubator") met with representatives from the Federal Communications Commission's ("FCC") Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau ("CGB"). The purpose of the meeting was to update the FCC on the consumer outreach work of AISP.4 Working Group 6 (WG6).

During this meeting, AISP.4 WG6 representatives provided copies of hearing aid compatibility ("HAC") consumer outreach materials, including brochures that were developed to assist consumers with the selection and use of digital wireless devices with hearing aids. Electronic copies of these brochures are attached to this letter.

The representatives also noted that additional informational materials are available on the ATIS HAC Incubator web site at: www.atis.org/hac/haclinks.asp and from CTIA - The Wireless Association's wireless accessibility site at www.accesswireless.org.

In attendance, representing the CGB, were: Monica Desai, Bureau Chief; Sue McNeil, Acting Deputy Bureau Chief, Consumer Outreach & Intergovernmental Affairs; Cheryl King, Deputy Chief, Disability Rights Office; and Pam Gregory, Special Advisor, Disability Rights Office. The individuals representing the ATIS HAC Incubator were: Susan Mazrui, Director, Federal Regulatory Affairs; Cingular Wireless (Chair of WG6); Lori Messing McGarry, Director, Policy, CTIA – The Wireless Association; Martha Ciske, Committee Administrator, ATIS; and Thomas Goode, Attorney, ATIS.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206(b)(2) of the Commission's rules, one copy of this letter is being filed electronically for inclusion in the public record of the above-referenced proceeding.

If there are any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,



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Industry Solutions
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Attachments

cc: Monica Desai, Chief, FCC Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Sue McNeil, Acting Deputy Bureau Chief, Consumer Outreach &
Intergovernmental Affairs, FCC Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Cheryl King, Deputy Chief, Disability Rights Office, FCC Consumer and
Governmental Affairs Bureau
Pam Gregory, Special Advisor, Disability Rights Office, FCC Consumer and
Governmental Affairs Bureau

RESOURCES

Many people and organizations contribute to ensuring accessible communication is equally available for deaf and hard of hearing consumers, including:

Hearing health resources

HEARING HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

Academy of Dispensing Audiologists
www.audiologist.org

Alexander Graham Bell Association
www.agbell.org

American Academy of Audiology
www.audiology.org

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
www.asha.org

Audiology Online
www.healthyhearing.com

Self Help for Hard of Hearing (SHHH)
www.hearingloss.org

ASSOCIATIONS

Hearing Industries Association
www.hearingindustries.org

UNIVERSITIES

Gallaudet University Technology Access Program
http://tap.gallaudet.edu

Wireless RERC at Georgia Tech
www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu

Regulatory

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
www.fcc.gov/cgb/

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
www.fda.gov

Wireless industry resources

ASSOCIATIONS

Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS)
www.atis.org/hac/index.asp

CTIA-The Wireless Association™
www.accesswireless.org

SERVICE PROVIDERS

Cingular
www.cingular.com/about/disability_resources

Nextel
www.nextel.com/en/about/community/accessibility.shtml

Sprint
www.sprintpcs.com

T-Mobile
www.tmobile.com

Verizon Wireless
www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/aboutUs/accessibility/index.jsp

MANUFACTURERS

LG
www.lge.com

Motorola
http://commerce.motorola.com/consumer/QWhtml/accessibility/features.html

Nokia
www.nokiaaccessibility.com

Research In Motion
www.blackberry.com

Samsung
www.samsungtelecom.com/contact_us/accessibility.asp

Sony Ericsson
www.sonyericsson.com

UTStarcom
www.utstar.com



GET THE BUZZ OUT

Hearing aid compatibility with digital wireless devices

"Getting the buzz out" courtesy of the ATIS Hearing Aid Compatibility Incubator wireless industry participants and CTIA-The Wireless Association™.



The availability of particular products may vary by region. Specifications are subject to change without notice. All rights reserved. Operations and some features are SIM card and/or network dependent. Please check the availability of GPRS, WAP and Internet services with your network operator and/or service provider. Organization, product, and company names mentioned herein may be trademarks or trade names of their respective owners.



GET THE BUZZ OUT

New **technologies** in hearing aid, wireless industries unleash a swarm of **choices** in **communication**

Complementing advancements in hearing aid technology, some digital wireless devices are now built for better use with hearing aids.

Beginning fall 2005, it will be easier to find the right phone to use with your hearing aids through package labeling and product trial periods.

Many new digital hearing aids are designed to be usable with wireless devices with lower RF emissions. Of the more than 2 million hearing aids sold in 2004, sixty percent (60%) include a basic circuitry design that increases immunity to interference. There are also acoustic amplifiers to increase volume and headsets available to further reduce interference and eliminate background noise.

Text messaging

Today's wireless devices are light, mobile, and packed with features to make writing easier. Some have full QWERTY keyboards, all have predictive text for faster typing, and some carriers

have plans for text- and data-only so you don't have to pay for voice features you may not use. Bluetooth enabled phones and wireless keyboards are also ideal for high-volume texters.

Forward thinking

In addition to providing hearing aid compatible devices, the wireless industry is exploring new technology solutions for improving communication for deaf and hard of hearing people such as:

- Mobile videophones for signing
- Interactive text services (character-by-character text recognition)
- Mobile-terminated TTY
- Critical planning, broadcasting, and SMS system.

The wireless industry is continuing to evaluate solutions to improve communication for hard of hearing customers who do not have the benefit of hearing aids or assistive listening devices.



CHOOSING AND USING A **DIGITAL DEVICE** WITH YOUR **HEARING AIDS**

To ensure we all benefit from advances in technology, the Federal Communications Commission has approved standards and passed regulations for digital wireless device use with hearing aids. The FCC modified the exemption for wireless phones under the Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988 ("HAC Act") "in light of the rising number of wireless calls to emergency services and the growing trend among wireless carriers to move away from analog services in favor of more efficient, feature-rich digital services."

Q. Will phones that are labeled FCC "Hearing Aid Compatible" (HAC) have any interference that causes static and buzzing sounds?

A. It depends on the level of immunity in your hearing aids and level of reduced emissions from the digital wireless device. The interference comes from both magnetic and RF (radiofrequency) pulses generated by digital wireless devices. There is no guarantee, but FCC HAC-compliant phones should improve usability for hearing aid wearers.

Q. How will I know if a phone is HAC-compliant?

A. FCC HAC-compliant device packages are marked with M3 or M4 rating. The M-rating refers to lower RF emissions level. Only phones that meet HAC compliance will be labeled as such. If you see an "M3" or "M4" on the box, then the phone has been designated as HAC compliant. If you have questions about the rating of a wireless device or service, ask your service provider or device manufacturer for more information.

Q. How do I know if my hearing aids work with wireless telephones?

A. Ask your hearing healthcare professional if your aids have "cell phone shielding," for the "M" (microphone) rating of your aids, or if the circuitry design is more immune to interference.

Q. May I try the phone before I buy?

A. Absolutely. It's best to try several phones before buying to find the best match with your hearing aids. Visit a full-service carrier store and ask to try phones that have been designated as "hearing aid compatible." After September 2005, stores owned and

operated by a wireless service provider should provide you with an opportunity to try out cell phones in the store.

Q. Is a HAC-compliant phone more expensive than a phone without hearing aid compatibility?

A. No.

Q. Who manufactures digital wireless devices that have been approved by the FCC?

A. All major handset manufacturers are required to offer HAC-compliant devices and may also offer accessories to improve clarity in communication.

Q. What carriers offer these phones and service plans?

A. All major nationwide carriers offer packages and support. Many regional carriers also offer phones and service plans.

Q. I already have a phone. Can I trade it in for a HAC-compliant device?

A. Check with your service provider.

Q. How will I know if a phone is HAC-compliant?

A. HAC-compliant device packages are marked with "M3" or "M4" ratings. The M-rating refers to the microphone mode. Only phones that meet HAC compliance will be labeled as such. If you see a "M3" or "M4" on the box then the phone has been designated as HAC compliant. Information about phones that meet the standard will also be shown on the display card by the phone in service provider operated retail stores and in the product's manual or packaging insert. If you have questions about the rating of a wireless device or service, ask your service provider or device manufacturer for more information.

Q. May I try the phone before I buy?

A. It's best to try several phones before buying to find the best match with your hearing aids. Visit a full-service carrier store and ask to try phones that have been designated as "hearing aid compatible." After September 2005, stores owned and operated by a wireless service provider will provide you with an opportunity to try out phones.

Q. Can I return the phone if it does not work for me after purchase?

A. Be sure to understand the return policy and early termination fees before signing up for any cell phone or service. Since a cell phone's RF emissions can change depending on your location your listening experience outside the store may be different.

Q. Do HAC compliant cell phones look any different from other cell phones?

A. No.

Try before you buy. It's best to try several phones before making your purchase to find the best match with your hearing aid.

New Technologies in hearing aid, wireless industries unleash a swarm of **choices in communication**

Many new digital hearing aids are designed to be usable with wireless devices with lower RF emissions. Of the more than 2 million hearing aids sold in 2004, eighty percent (80%) include a basic circuitry design that increases immunity to interference.

Hearing loss and hearing aids are highly individualized. While FCC Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) regulations should improve cell phone usability for hearing aid users, some may still not find a cell phone that works for them at this time. If you can not find a cell phone that works for you, you may wish to consider the use of an accessory device to aid your cell phone use. Accessories such as inductive neckloops, inductive silhouettes, and direct-audio-input-modified earbuds help to reduce interference, especially for t-coil users.

RESOURCES

Many people and organizations contribute to ensuring accessible communication is equally available for all individuals with disabilities including deaf and hard of hearing consumers. For more information for consumers on HAC wireless visit:

<http://www.accesswireless.org>

"Getting the buzz out" courtesy of the **Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions Hearing Aid Compatibility Incubator** and **CTIA- The Wireless Association™**

.....
**Hearing Aid
Compatibility**
with
Digital Wireless Devices



Get the BUZZ Out.
.....

CHOOSING AND USING A DIGITAL WIRELESS DEVICE WITH YOUR HEARING AIDS

To ensure everyone benefits from advances in technology, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) has approved standards and passed regulations for digital wireless device use with hearing aids. In 2001, the FCC modified the exemption for wireless phones under the *Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988* in light of the rising number of wireless calls to emergency services and the growing trend among wireless carriers to move away from analog services in favor of more efficient and feature-rich digital services.”



Q. What does hearing aid compatibility (HAC) mean for wireless devices?
A. The FCC defines HAC for cell phones in terms of two parameters; radio-frequency (RF) emissions and telecoil coupling. Cell phones that comply with the FCC’s hearing aid compatibility rule must receive a minimum rating of M3 for RF emissions and T3 for telecoil coupling.

Q. When will hearing aid compatible cell phones be available?
A. The FCC requires that nationwide carriers offer a range of phones that comply with HAC regulations beginning in September 2005 for microphone mode and in September 2006 for telecoil mode. Many regional carriers will also offer phones and support. Some cell phones that are usable with hearing aids are already on the market.

Q. Does the new FCC regulation guarantee that I will be able to use a cell phone with my hearing aid?
A. While there is no guarantee; phones that comply with Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) regulations should improve usability for hearing aid users. Hearing loss and hearing aids are highly individualized so it is still advisable to try a cell phone with your hearing aid in the store before making your cell phone purchase.

Q. Who manufactures digital wireless devices that have been approved by the FCC?
A. All major handset manufacturers are required to offer HAC-compliant devices and may also offer hands-free accessories to improve usability.

Q. Are HAC-compliant phones more expensive than phones without hearing aid compatibility?
A. No. The range of features and functions of cell phones will impact the price, but hearing aid compatibility will not. Service provider owned and operated stores will offer a range of phones with varying features and prices.

Q. What does “M” on the label mean?
A. “M” refers to the phone’s RF emissions level and is intended for use with hearing aids in the microphone mode. The higher the “M” rating on the phone the more likely it is you will be able to use the phone with your hearing aid on the microphone setting.

Q. I already have a cell phone. May I trade it in for a new hearing aid compatible phone?
A. Consult with your service provider.

Advancements in cell phones and hearing aids offer consumers with hearing loss more freedom to use digital wireless devices, increasing the likelihood consumers will be able to find a cell phone they are **able to use.**



Q. What does the “T” on the label mean?
A. “T” refers to the phone’s coupling ability and is intended for use with hearing aids in the telecoil mode. The higher the “T” number the more likely you will be able to use the phone with your hearing aid on the telecoil setting.

Q. How do I know if my hearing aids will work with my cell phone?
A. Your hearing healthcare professional will be able to tell you if your hearing aid is immune to RF interference and may need to contact the manufacturer of your hearing aid to determine its immunity rating.

Q. Are there phones I can use with my hearing aid on the telecoil setting?
A. There may be phones already on the market that work with telecoils but they are not yet labeled. The FCC regulations require that cell phones be manufactured for use with hearing aids on the telecoil setting by September 2006. They will be labeled on the box with ratings of T3 or T4.

Q. What if I cannot find a cell phone that works with my hearing aid?
A. You can check with your hearing healthcare professional to determine if there is a hearing aid option for you that may work better with cell phones. Some telecoil users may find that accessories such as neckloops may further assist with their use of wireless devices until cell phones are tested and rated for telecoil compatibility, and for using non-rated cell phones.

