

**Guidelines for Operators of Sound Broadcasting Service and
Domestic Free TV Programme Service for
Outage Reporting**

Office of the Communications Authority

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1 Introduction

1.1 Sound broadcasting services (i.e. conventional sound broadcasting of amplitude modulation (AM) and frequency modulation (FM)) and domestic free TV programme services (hereinafter referred to as the Broadcasting Services) as provided free of charge are important to the general public in Hong Kong as sources of education, entertainment and information. Most people rely on the Broadcasting Services especially to keep alert of essential information, breaking news and announcements. From time to time, the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) receives complaints / enquiries from the general public about the reception of the Broadcasting Services. In the event of outage of the Broadcasting Services, the broadcasting operators¹ (hereinafter referred to as the Operators) concerned are required to report to OFCA in accordance with the requirements specified in this document.

1.2 Both the Operators and OFCA should play their respective roles in advising the viewers / listeners and the public on the outage of Broadcasting Services. Operators, having the first-hand information about the operational status of their broadcasting networks and services, should be responsible for providing prompt information and advice to their viewers / listeners on any service outages or degradation. Where the outage or degradation falls within the reporting criteria stipulated in this document, the Operator concerned should, in addition to providing information and advice to its respective viewers / listeners, report to OFCA within the specified timeframe. OFCA, upon receiving such information, may help disseminate the information to the public, and provide guidance where necessary if the outage or degradation is assessed to have territory-wide and significant implications.

2 Reportable Outages

2.1 An outage refers to any event that adversely affects the normal reception of the Broadcasting Services by viewers / listeners. It is classified into critical outage (C-Outage) and major outage (M-Outage) depending on the extent of affected situations. Examples are the failure of a master control facility affecting transmission of TV programmes to the broadcasting network, and breaking down of

¹ For the purpose of these guidelines, “broadcasting operators” refers to the licensees of sound broadcasting services and domestic free television programme services, and the Radio Television Hong Kong.

the studio-to-transmitter link or a transmitting station of the broadcasting network.

2.2 The triggering criteria for reporting C-Outage and M-Outage are specified in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively. Examples of reportable outages are given in Appendix 3. Operators should, whenever necessary, report other outage events not necessarily listed in Appendices 1, 2, and 3.

3 Reporting Timeframe

3.1 If an outage of the Broadcasting Service occurs and meets the triggering criteria as specified in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 or Appendix 3, the Operator concerned should report the outage by sending an initial outage report to OFCA in accordance with the reporting timeframe specified in Appendix 4.

4 Information to be provided by Operators when Reporting an Outage

4.1 When reporting an outage of Broadcasting Services, the Operator concerned should provide OFCA with the following information, whenever possible:

- (a) name of the operator;
- (b) brief description of the incident;
- (c) date and time of onset of the incident;
- (d) affected stations/areas;
- (e) actions taken or being taken; and
- (f) name of contact person as well as the person's telephone number and email address.

5 Updates on Service Status

5.1 During the recovery stage, the Operator concerned should keep OFCA informed of the status of the affected service. Under critical circumstances, OFCA may specify the update frequency and the information to be provided by the Operator concerned to facilitate the assessment on the impact of the outage and the progress of recovery of the affected service.

6 Incident Report

6.1 A report giving a detailed account of the incident, the events that lead to the occurrence of the outage and the remedial actions taken should be submitted to OFCA within two weeks after the incident.

6.2 Where requested by OFCA, a full report giving a detailed account of the measures which have been taken (or will be taken) in order to prevent similar incidents from happening again should be submitted to OFCA within one month after the incident.

7 Contact Points for Reporting Outages

7.1 OFCA's contact points for reporting outages are given in Appendix 5.

Appendix 1

**Triggering Criteria for Reporting C-Outages
(applicable to Domestic Free TV Broadcasting Operators)**

| Outage Events | Duration of the outage (minutes) | Extent of the outage |
|---|---|---|
| - Failure of the master control facility (e.g. studio, common control unit in the studio, etc.) | > 15 | - All viewers will be affected |
| - Failure of the principal TV transmitting station at Temple Hill (e.g. transmitter / studio-to-transmitter link, etc.) | > 15 | - Viewers within the coverage area of Temple Hill principal transmitting station will be affected |

Appendix 1

Triggering Criteria for Reporting C-Outages (applicable to Sound Broadcasting Operators)

| Outage Events | Duration of the outage (minutes) | Extent of the outage |
|--|---|---|
| - Failure of the master control facility (e.g. studio, common control unit in the studio, etc.) | > 15 | - All listeners will be affected |
| - Failure of the principal FM transmitting stations at Mount Gough/ Kowloon Peak (e.g. transmitter / studio-to-transmitter link, etc.) | > 15 | - Listeners within the coverage area of the concerned principal transmitting station will be affected |

**Triggering Criteria for Reporting M-Outages
(applicable to Domestic Free TV Broadcasting Operators)**

| Outage Events | Duration of the outage (minutes) | Extent of the outage |
|---|---|--|
| - Failure of other TV transmitting stations, including fill-in stations (e.g. transmitter / studio-to-transmitter link, etc.) | > 30 | - Viewers within the coverage area of the concerned transmitting stations will be affected |
| - Failure of network synchronization/timing equipment for TV transmitting stations | > 30 | - Part of viewers within the overlapping areas of the concerned transmitting stations will be affected |

**Triggering Criteria for Reporting M-Outages
(applicable to Sound Broadcasting Operators)**

| Outage Events | Duration of the outage (minutes) | Extent of the outage |
|--|---|--|
| - Failure of AM transmitting station (e.g. transmitter / studio-to-transmitter link, etc.) | > 30 | - Listeners of AM services will be affected |
| - Failure of FM transmitting stations (other than Mount Gough/Kowloon Peak), including fill-in transmitting stations (e.g. transmitter / studio-to-transmitter link, etc.) | > 30 | - Listeners within the coverage area of the concerned transmitting stations will be affected |

Examples of Reportable Outages

1. Failure of Master Control Facility

The following incidents are examples which may cause outage of the master control facility in the studio:

- When a common control unit fails;
- When there is a loss of AC power supply and the backup power supply fails to start.

2. Failure of Studio-to-Transmitter Link (STL)

A designated radio or landline link will be deployed to link up the broadcasting house / live studio and transmitting stations.

Examples of STL failures are:

- When there is a failure of STL equipment;
- When the designated STL (e.g. radio link, landline link, etc.) is not capable of conveying the signals to the transmitting station.

3. Failure of Transmitting Station

Examples leading to the failure of the transmitting station are:

- Failure of common control unit;
- When the signal source is blocked / being severely interfered with;
- When there is a failure of transmission equipment.

4. Failure of Network Equipment

Examples of network equipment failures are:

- When there is a failure in the Global Positioning System (GPS) module for precise timing reference;
- When there is a failure in any timing reference/control equipment;
- When there is a failure in the core network equipment.

Note: The list above is by no means exhaustive. Operators should report other outages causing the service impact comparable to any of the events listed in Appendices 1 or 2.

**Timeframe for Reporting Outages
(applicable to Domestic Free TV Broadcasting Operators)**

(a) C-Outage

| Occurrence Time | Initial Report | Restoration of Service |
|------------------------|---|---|
| From 00:00 to 23:59 | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a C-Outage is met report the C-Outage to OFCA within 60 minutes. | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 60 minutes after the restoration of the service is confirmed. |

(b) M-Outage

| Occurrence Time | Initial Report | Restoration of Service |
|---|--|--|
| <u>Time Zone 1</u> From 08:00 to 23:00 | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a M-Outage is confirmed report the M-Outage to OFCA within 2 hours. | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 2 hours after the restoration of the service is confirmed. |
| <u>Time Zone 2</u> From 23:00 to 08:00 | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a M-Outage is confirmed report the M-Outage to OFCA within 2 hours or by 08:30, whichever is later. | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 2 hours after the restoration of the service is confirmed or by 08:30, whichever is later. |

**Timeframe for Reporting Outages
(applicable to Sound Broadcasting Operators)**

(a) C-Outage

| Occurrence Time | Initial Report | Restoration of Service |
|---|--|--|
| <u>Time Zone 1</u> From 09:00 to 18:00 on business day | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a C-Outage is met report the C-Outage to OFCA within 2 hours. | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 2 hours after the restoration of the service is confirmed. |
| <u>Time Zone 2</u> Other period outside Time Zone 1 | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a C-Outage is met report the C-Outage to OFCA within 2 hours or by 11:00 on business day, whichever is later. | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 2 hours after the restoration of the service is confirmed or by 11:00 on business day, whichever is later. |

(b) M-Outage

| Occurrence Time | Initial Report | Restoration of Service |
|---|--|--|
| <u>Time Zone 1</u> From 09:00 to 18:00 on business day | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a M-Outage is confirmed report the M-Outage to OFCA within 2 hours. | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 2 hours after the restoration of the service is confirmed. |
| <u>Time Zone 2</u> Other period outside Time Zone 1 | The operator concerned should after one of the triggering criteria for reporting a M-Outage is confirmed report the M-Outage to OFCA | The operator concerned should report to OFCA within 2 hours after the restoration of the service is confirmed or by 11:00 on business day, |

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|--|---|---------------------|
| | within 2 hours or by 11:00 on business day, whichever is later. | whichever is later. |
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Contact Points for Reporting Outages

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