

# Translators and Arbitron's Services

This policy brief provides an overview of the FM translator service and Arbitron policies related to translators. This information may be useful in understanding and evaluating the role of translators in a station's audience estimates.

## The Translator Service

The translator service is a supplemental radio service. Key characteristics that distinguish translators from FM stations include:

- *Programming:* The FCC prohibits a translator from originating any programming. A translator must retransmit the signal of another FCC-licensed radio station.
- *Maximum Power:* FCC regulations limit a translator's maximum effective radiated power at 250 watts. Due to this ceiling, a translator signal covers a limited geographic area.
- *Dial Position:* The FCC does not permit a translator to broadcast at the same dial position as the station retransmitted on the translator.
- *Call Sign:* The FCC identifies translators with an alphanumeric call sign. A translator call sign includes either the letter "W" or the letter "K" followed by the translator's FM band channel number and a two-letter identifier. On its Internet site, the FCC cites "W285AD" and "K220AA" as examples of translator call signs.

## Why Broadcasters Use Translators

Most broadcasters that use a translator do so to retransmit the signal of an FM radio station in an area where the FM station's reception is poor.

In recent years, broadcasters have also used translators to retransmit AM and HD-multicast stations; by doing so, these broadcasters expand the footprint of the station to the standard FM band.

## Translators and the Diary Service

Should a diary entry report listening to a station via its translator, Arbitron assigns credit for the entry to that

station. As such, Arbitron includes a station's translator listening in the station's audience estimates.

For a station to be eligible for listening credit via its translator in Arbitron's Diary service, the station must notify Arbitron of the translator's dial position.

Each year, Arbitron reviews its Diary credit database to identify translators that were not mentioned in any Diaries in past survey year. Arbitron removes these translators from its databases.

Arbitron takes this approach to translator auditing because translator licenses are transferred from one party to another with more regularity than are AM and FM station licenses, and to account for the fact that the FCC does not keep a detailed record of what station is retransmitted on any particular translator.

## Translators and the PPM™ Service

When a translator retransmits the signal of an encoded radio station, the translator also retransmits that station's PPM encoding. As such, when a panelist listens to the station via its translator, the station receives credit.

An encoded radio station should notify Arbitron of any translators that retransmit the station's encoded signal.

## Translator Information Collection

Arbitron does not actively solicit translator information from radio stations. Should a station wish to notify Arbitron of its translator, the station should contact Arbitron's Station Relations Team.

## Additional Information

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