

previous rules for lead inspector, lead contractor, or lead worker remain licensed or certified until their annual expiration dates but must meet the requirements of the amended rules to remain licensed thereafter.

MDH has statutory authority and an administrative plan for monitoring compliance with its lead rules. MDH staff conduct on-site evaluations of lead training courses, lead inspections, lead hazard screens, lead risk assessments, and lead hazard reduction, which is defined to include lead abatement. The Minnesota Health enforcement Consolidation Act provides for penalties of up to \$10,000. The amount of administrative penalties depends on the severity of the violations and can be partly or entirely forgivable, if remedial actions are promptly implemented. In addition, licenses can be suspended or revoked.

IV. Federal Overfiling

Section 404(b) of TSCA makes it unlawful for any person to violate, or fail or refuse to comply with, any requirement of an approved State or Tribal program. Therefore, EPA reserves the right to exercise its enforcement authority under TSCA against a violation of, or a failure or refusal to comply with, any requirement of an authorized State or Tribal program.

V. Submission to Congress and the General Accounting Office

The Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*, as added by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, generally provides that before certain actions may take effect, the agency promulgating the action must submit a report, which includes a copy of the action, to each House of the Congress and to the Comptroller General of the United States. EPA will submit a report containing this action and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of this document in the **Federal Register**. This action is not a "major rule" as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

List of Subjects

Environmental protection, Hazardous substances, Lead, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: December 1, 1999.

Gary Gulezian,

Acting Administrator, Region V.

[FR Doc. 99-33162 Filed 12-21-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5650-50-F

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[DA 99-2790]

Public Safety National Coordination Committee

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This document advises interested persons of a meeting of the Public Safety National Coordination Committee ("NCC"), which will be held in Washington, D.C. The Federal Advisory Committee Act, Public Law 92-463, as amended, requires public notice of all meetings of the NCC. This notice advises interested persons of the fifth meeting of the Public Safety National Coordination Committee.

DATES: January 14, 2000 at 1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Designated Federal Officer, Michael J. Wilhelm, (202) 418-0680, e-mail mwilhelm@fcc.gov. Press Contact, Meribeth McCarrick, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, 202-418-0600, or e-mail mmccarri@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Following is the complete text of the Public Notice: This Public Notice advises interested persons of the fifth meeting of the Public Safety National Coordination Committee ("NCC"), which will be held in Washington, D.C. The Federal Advisory Committee Act, Public Law 92-463, as amended, requires public notice of all meetings of the NCC.

Date: January 14, 2000.

Meeting Time: General Membership Meeting—1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Address: Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Commission Meeting Room, Washington, D.C. 20554.

The NCC Subcommittees will meet from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, continuing their meetings from the previous day. The NCC General Membership Meeting will commence at 1:30 p.m. and continue until 5:00 p.m. The agenda for the NCC membership meeting is as follows:

1. Introduction and Welcoming Remarks.
2. Administrative Matters.
3. Report from the Interoperability Subcommittee.
4. Remarks of Thomas Sugrue—Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.
5. Report from the Technology Subcommittee.

6. Report from the Implementation Subcommittee.

7. Public Discussion.

8. Other Business.

9. Upcoming Meeting Dates and Locations.

10. Closing Remarks.

The FCC has established the Public Safety National Coordination Committee, pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, to advise the Commission on a variety of issues relating to the use of the 24 MHz of spectrum in the 764-776/794-806 MHz frequency bands (collectively, the 700 MHz band) that has been allocated to public safety services. *See* The Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements For Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010 and Establishment of Rules and Requirements For Priority Access Service, WT Docket No. 96-86, *First Report and Order and Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC 98-191, 14 FCC Rcd 152 (1998), 63 FR 58645 (11-2-98).

The NCC has an open membership. Previous expressions of interest in membership have been received in response to several Public Notices inviting interested persons to become members and to participate in the NCC's processes. All persons who have previously identified themselves or have been designated as a representative of an organization are deemed members and are invited to attend. All other interested parties are hereby invited to attend and to participate in the NCC processes and its meetings and to become members of the Committee. This policy will ensure balanced participation. Members of the general public may attend the meeting. To attend the fifth meeting of the Public Safety National Coordination Committee, please RSVP to Joy Alford or Bert Weintraub of the Policy and Rules Branch of the Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau of the FCC by calling (202) 418-0680, by faxing (202) 418-2643, or by E-mailing at jalford@fcc.gov or bweintra@fcc.gov. Please provide your name, the organization you represent, your phone number, fax number and e-mail address. This RSVP is for the purpose of determining the number of people who will attend this fifth meeting. The FCC will attempt to accommodate as many people as possible. However, admittance will be limited to the seating available. Persons requesting accommodations for hearing disabilities should contact Joy Alford immediately.

at (202) 418-7233 (TTY). Persons requesting accommodations for other physical disabilities should contact Joy Alford immediately at (202) 418-0694 or via e-mail at jalford@fcc.gov. The public may submit written comments to the NCC's Designated Federal Officer before the meeting.

Additional information about the NCC and NCC-related matters can be found on the NCC website located at: <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/publicsafety/ncc.html>.

Federal Communications Commission.

Jeanne Kowalski,

Deputy Chief, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

[FR Doc. 99-33113 Filed 12-21-99; 8:45 am]

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[DA 99-2674]

Responsible Accounting Officer: Re: Auditor Independence and Objectivity

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This document discusses the importance of independence and objectivity in the performance of audit work required by the Commission and adopts, as modified for Commission purposes, *Standard No. 1* of the Independence Standards Board, which requires auditors to disclose and discuss potential independence problems.

DATES: May 22, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Federal Communications Commission, 445-12th Street, SW, TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Stone, Accounting Safeguards Division, Common Carrier Bureau, (202) 418-0816.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This Notice, was adopted and released on December 1, 1999. The full text of this Commission decision is available for inspection and copying during normal business hours in the FCC Reference Center (Room CY-A257), 445 12th Street NW, Washington, DC 20554. The complete text may also be purchased from the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Service, Inc., 1231 20th Street, Washington, DC 20036, telephone (202) 857-3800.

Summary of Responsible Accounting Officer Letter

I. Introduction

The Commission relies on outside auditors to verify carrier compliance with a variety of Commission rules. For this to be effective, the Commission needs to be confident that the auditors are acting independently and that the opinions expressed by the auditors are objective and unbiased. This Responsible Accounting Officer (RAO) letter discusses the importance of independence and objectivity in the performance of audit work required by the Commission and adopts, as modified for Commission purposes, *Standard No. 1* of the Independence Standards Board, which requires auditors to disclose and discuss potential independence problems.

II. Background

In the *Joint Cost Order*, adopted in 1988, 53 FR 49320 (December 7, 1988), the Commission required large local exchange carriers to obtain independent audits to verify that their systems for allocating costs between regulated and nonregulated activities accurately reflected the procedures set forth in their cost allocation manuals and application of the Commission's rules. The Commission expressed concern in the *Joint Cost Order* that independence problems might arise, but the Commission declined to choose the independent auditors for the carriers, instead relying on the auditors' standards of professional conduct to mitigate its concerns. The Commission stated that it would review the auditors' work and "take appropriate corrective action if [it had] reason to believe that a particular firm has not performed its task in an objective and competent manner." Since that initial requirement was adopted in 1988, the Commission has added many other instances in which independent audits are relied upon to assure compliance with its rules.

Auditors are governed by standards of professional conduct that require them to remain objective toward and independent of the audited company. Those standards emphasize independence and objectivity in both fact and appearance, reflecting the practical view that, even if independent in fact, auditors should avoid even the appearance of bias so that those who rely on the results of their audits can be confident in their work.

Consulting and advocacy by accounting firms has increased substantially in recent years. In many instances, carriers use the same

accounting firms to advocate positions on issues before the Commission that they engage to perform independent audits. Advocacy or support on behalf of a carrier concerning issues before the Commission, particularly with respect to auditing or accounting matters, could raise concerns and questions about the independence and objectivity of the auditors.

III. Discussion

To address the independence implications for the new consulting and advocacy services provided by auditors, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants recently established the Independence Standards Board (ISB). The initial standard of the ISB, *Standard No. 1—Independence Discussions with Audit Committees*, requires the following:

At least annually, independent auditors shall:

(a) Disclose to the audit committee (or the board of directors if there is no audit committee), in writing, all relationships between the auditor and its related entities and the company and its related entities that in the auditor's professional judgment may reasonably be thought to bear on independence;

(b) Confirm in writing that in its professional judgment it is independent of the company within the meaning of the Securities Acts; and

(c) Discuss the auditor's independence with the audit committee.

We believe that *Standard No. 1* can be adapted to address in part the Commission's concern about auditor independence. The Commission's concern that audits be performed with independence and objectivity mirror the concern of audit committees that are responsible for engaging independent auditors for corporations. Therefore we establish the following standard based on ISB's *Standard No. 1*. For independent audits performed pursuant to Part 32 and Sections 64.901 *et seq.* of the Commission's rules, the auditor shall at least annually:

(a) Disclose to the Accounting Safeguards Division (ASD) of the Common Carrier Bureau in writing all relationships between the auditor and its related entities and the carrier and its related entities that in the auditor's professional judgment may reasonably be thought to bear on independence;

(b) Confirm in writing to AS that in its professional judgment it is independent of the carrier; and

(c) Discuss the auditor's independence with ASD.

Creation of the Independence Standards Board is an encouraging sign