



Triangle Communications

SECURITY & COMMUNICATIONS

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# FCC Narrowbanding Mandate

## Introduction

Since 1976 [Triangle Communications, Inc.](#) has been ahead of the curve with technological advancements and regulations.

Whether it's forestalling changes in your company's essential communication devices—like paging, mobile dispatch and wireless phone systems,—or keeping a finger on the pulse of the latest security systems, Triangle Communications customizes their communications and security products to anticipate your needs and provide you with cutting-edge solutions.

Personalized customer service is the cornerstone that upholds Triangle Communications' reputation.

Triangle Communications believes personal, timely, and reliable customer service isn't an old-fashioned idea: it's today's key to success.

Part of their customer service hinges on educating you about the impending Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Narrowbanding Mandate.

Triangle Communications has known about the impending FCC Narrowbanding Mandate since 1992. Therefore, most of their current customers will not experience any interference from the mandate. In fact, many clients will have been narrowbanded for more than a decade by the time the Jan. 1, 2013 deadline occurs.

Roy Smoker, president and owner of Triangle Communications ([click here to e-mail Smoker](#)) and Bryan Walton, director of marketing ([click here to e-mail Walton](#)) discuss the impending deadline and what mobile wideband radio system users and licensees—both analog and data—must do now to comply with the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate by Jan. 1, 2013.

*Be advised: The FCC Narrowbanding Mandate is not optional and serious consequences, including loss of radio communications, substantial FCC fines and revocation of FCC licenses, can occur for those who fail to comply by Jan. 1, 2013.*

## What is mandatory narrowbanding?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) imposed requirements for two-way radio systems for the following spectrum bands:

- VHF (150-174 MHz: available nationwide)
- UHF (421-430 MHz: available only in Detroit, Buffalo and Cleveland)  
(450-470 MHz: available nationwide)  
(470-512 MHz: shared UHF-TV; available in 11 cities)

Traditionally, these systems operate on bandwidths of 25 kHz. Narrowbanding requires all two-way radios to switch to channel bandwidths of 12.5 kHz. This means two-way radios are required to convert their existing wideband (25 kHz) to the narrowband (12.5 kHz) operation by Jan. 1, 2013. Any equipment that lacks the capability to convert will need to be replaced. Licensees will also need to be reclassified.

Smoker likens the present two-way radio wideband to a single lane highway, where information travels in dual directions down the road. Smoker said the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate is analogous to creating a three-lane highway, which means traffic can go in dual directions and the third lane can be used by either traffic pattern. As a result, the bandwidth is doubled and the channels are cut in half.

By Jan. 1, 2013, all two-way radios—both digital and analog—will need to have changed their existing wideband (25 kHz) to the narrowband (12.5 kHz) operation to meet the deadline.

Converting is not optional and serious consequences including loss of radio communications, substantial FCC fines and revocation of FCC licenses can occur.

## Who does the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate impact?

The FCC Narrowbanding Mandate impacts all users and licensees of two-way radio systems, regardless of whether they use analog or data. As a result, users will need to replace two-way radios that cannot support the impending mandate.

## Is narrowbanding optional?

Mandatory narrowbanding is not optional. Failure to comply with the mandate may result in serious consequences up to and including license termination. Compliance is the licensees' responsibility. If users don't meet the requirements, Smoker said the FCC can pinpoint user location, and users will face consequences including the loss of radio communications, substantial FCC fines, and/or revocation of FCC licenses. Consequences may not happen on Jan. 1, 2013, but Triangle Communications believes they will happen within six months after the deadline.



## **What are the narrowbanding deadlines for licensees?**

Wideband systems need to be narrowbanded by Jan. 1, 2013. Licensees also need to be reclassified by the deadline.

## **Do licensees need to do anything today?**

Users need to find their license, and see if it's classified as narrowbanded. If not, users need to take steps to make the switch.

Be advised, companies are sending notifications to users that imply for a set fee, the company can narrowband two-way radios and update licensees for you. Triangle Communications advises against responding to these messages.

Instead, contact your service company. The service company will have access to the FCC database online and can review your license. Your service provider will let you know if you've been reclassified or not.

If a license expires after March 30, 2013, customers can wait to do a renewal modification at the same time. Triangle Communications said it's permissible to renew a license 90 days after expiration.

If a license shows as wideband, it must be reclassified or else the license will be revoked.

## **How can clients begin the transition?**

After users inventory equipment and find the license, users will need to check the narrowbanding status of their two-way radios. To do this, users need to contact their service provider and ask the company if their present two-way radios are capable of being narrowbanded.

If so, the equipment will need to be reprogrammed.

If not, users will need to plan now for the financial cost that may be incurred to update the equipment. Early planning will allow for a gradual transition up until the Jan. 1, 2013 deadline.

When purchasing new equipment, be wary of vendors who may try to unload equipment that isn't capable of being narrowbanded, and avoid purchasing radios on eBay that lack the capability.

## **How can customers plan for the transition?**

Contact your service provider now.

Most providers will walk their customers through the process.



Work with technicians and engineers to assess the current and future operational needs for the organization. Take time to evaluate your present equipment to see if it's capable of being narrow-banded. As a rule of thumb, if two-way radios are 10-15 years old, they may not be capable of narrowbanding, which means the equipment will need to be replaced.

Let vendors know of your organization's requirements and goals. This may be an opportunity to upgrade to new technologies with enhanced digital capabilities. Ensure necessary funds are available to replace or upgrade equipment, as it may be costly.

Make purchasing decisions based on equipment that best meets your organizational goals and budget. Ensure that your vendor will be able to meet the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate deadline of Jan. 1, 2013.

## **Triangle Communications offers a word of advice for those who will be affected by the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate.**

The FCC will not send a notification to let licensees know they need to narrowband by Jan. 1, 2013. Users will need to contact their service provider.

Triangle Communications advises users and licensees to make the switch to narrowbanding as soon as possible because there may be equipment and manpower shortages. The FCC may be overloaded and backlogged with last minute applications. According to Smoker, licensing usually processes within three weeks, and it may be delayed as much as three months.

There will be no exceptions to the Jan. 1, 2013 FCC Narrowbanding Mandate regardless of industry.

### **For more information:**

[Click here](#) to view Triangle Communication's website outlining the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate.

Contact Triangle Communications for a free narrowbanding assessment.

- Lancaster: 940 West Main Street, New Holland, PA 17557 1-800-828-7716
- Harrisburg: 99 15th Street, New Cumberland, PA 17070 1-888-591-7455
- Reading: 3201 Montrose Avenue, Laureldale, PA 19605 1-800-930-4211

Or [click here](#) to e-mail Roy Smoker, Triangle Communications president and owner and [click here](#) to e-mail Bryan Walton, Triangle Communications director of marketing.

