

Must-carry or Retransmission Consent? Television Stations Must Notify Cable and Satellite Operators by October 1st

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Just a reminder that by **October 1**, Television stations must once again make their triennial carriage elections. By that date, TV stations must notify the local cable systems and satellite carriers in their market in writing as to whether the station intends to be carried pursuant to **must-carry or a retransmission consent** agreement for the next three-year term, which runs from Jan. 1, 2012 through Dec. 31, 2014. Accordingly, before Oct. 1, stations must send a written election notice to the cable systems and satellite providers in their market via certified mail, return receipt requested. The election letter should indicate the station's call letters, channel, community of license, DMA assignment, and contact information, in addition to answering the basic question of whether the station would like to elect carriage pursuant to must-carry or else negotiate a retransmission consent agreement. In addition, those stations electing carriage pursuant to must-carry should also indicate the channel on which they wish to be carried (i.e., the over the air channel, the cable channel on which it has been carried historically, or some other mutually agreeable channel). And be sure to keep copies of the election letters sent out. Copies of all the election letters must be maintained in the station's public inspection files.

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