

Division, Sector Delaware Bay, U.S. Coast Guard; telephone (206) 815-6688, option 3; email SecDelBayWWM@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Coast Guard will enforce the special local regulation in Table 1 to Paragraph (i)(1) in 33 CFR 100.501, for the regulated area of the Ocean City Airshow from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on September 20, 2026. This action is being taken to provide for the safety of life on navigable waterways during this event. Our regulation for marine events within the USCG East District, § 100.501, specifies the location of the regulated area for the “Ocean City Airshow” which encompasses portions of the Atlantic Ocean off Ocean City, NJ. During the enforcement period, as reflected in § 100.501(d)(2), a vessel operator may request permission to enter and transit through a regulated area by contacting the Event PATCOM or official patrol vessel on VHF-FM channel 16. When authorized to transit through the regulated area, the vessel must proceed at the minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course that minimizes wake near the event area.

In addition to this notification of enforcement in the **Federal Register**, the Coast Guard plans to provide notification of this enforcement period via the Local Notice to Mariners and Broadcast Notice to Mariners.

R. Rivera,
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port, Sector Delaware Bay.

[FR Doc. 2026-18463 Filed 9-9-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 9110-04-P

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

47 CFR Part 64

[CG Docket No. 03-123, GN Docket No. 25-133; FCC 26-56; FR ID 366314]

Telecommunications Relay Service ASCII Format Requirement

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: In this document, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) amends its rules to eliminate the requirement that Text Telephone (TTY)-based Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) be capable of communicating in the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) format. By removing this outdated regulatory mandate, the Commission relieves TRS

providers of the obligation to maintain costly and obsolete ASCII-compatible hardware and software systems. Eliminating this requirement will reduce inefficiencies, preserve the integrity of the TRS Fund, and allow providers to redirect resources toward modern relay technologies, all without adversely impacting functional equivalence for consumers who rely on TTY-based TRS.

DATES: Effective October 13, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joshua Mendelsohn, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at (202) 559-7304 or Joshua.Mendelsohn@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This is a summary of the Commission's Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities and Delete, Delete, Delete, Report and Order (*Order*) in CG Docket No. 03-123 and GN Docket No. 25-133, document FCC 26-56, adopted August 21, 2026 and released August 25, 2026. The full text of this document is available online at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-26-56A1.pdf>.

Paperwork Reduction Act: The *Order* does not contain new or modified information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. In addition, therefore, it does not contain any new or modified information collection burden for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees, pursuant to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002.

Congressional Review Act: The Commission has determined, and the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, concurs, that this rule is “non-major” under the Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 804(2). The Commission sent a copy of the *Order* to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

Synopsis

1. Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), codified at section 225 of the Communications Act, requires the Commission to ensure that TRS is available “to the extent possible and in the most efficient manner” to enable people with hearing or speech disabilities to communicate in a manner that is functionally equivalent to voice communication service. 47 U.S.C. 225(a)(3), (b)(1). In accordance with this directive, the Commission has adopted mandatory minimum standards for TRS.

2. At that time, TTYs generally used the Baudot coding format, but the ASCII format was widely used to transmit data between personal computers over the telephone network. The Commission, believing that ASCII was “a superior technology” that would eventually supplant Baudot as the preferred format, required that TRS be able to transmit in both ASCII and Baudot at any speed generally in use. Over the last three decades, technological advancements have revolutionized the TRS landscape, and introduced forms of non-TTY-based TRS that do not rely on the ASCII and Baudot formats to transmit information.

3. Baudot remains the predominant TTY-based TRS format, currently accounting for almost all TTY-based TRS communications. Recognizing the obsolescence of the ASCII format, T-Mobile Accessibility (T-Mobile) filed a Petition for Rulemaking in August 2022, requesting the Commission to amend § 64.604(b)(1) of its rules, to eliminate the ASCII requirement. T-Mobile noted that ASCII-based TTY calls represent a tiny fraction of its overall TRS call minutes, and that complying with the requirement forces providers to incur unnecessary hardware costs and hinders network upgrades. Following a June 2023 request from T-Mobile for a temporary waiver of the rule, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (Bureau) granted a conditional two-year waiver of the ASCII requirement to T-Mobile and Hamilton on November 22, 2024. On June 27, 2025, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), published at 90 FR 164, August 27, 2025, proposing to permanently delete the ASCII requirement from § 64.604(b)(1) of the Commission's rules.

4. The Commission adopts its proposal to delete the requirement in § 64.604(b)(1) of its rules, 47 CFR 64.604(b)(1), that TTY-based TRS support the ASCII format. The Commission also finds good cause to eliminate the definition of ASCII from the Commission's TRS rules. The record confirms that ASCII usage for TTY-based TRS is exceedingly small and continues to shrink. Data provided in the NPRM indicated that in a three-month period in 2022, total ASCII usage of TTY-based TRS did not exceed 87 minutes, representing approximately 0.01 percent of total TTY-based TRS minutes. Following waiver of the ASCII requirement in November 2024, one TTY-based TRS provider reports that it has not had a single request to have ASCII made available and the Commission has not received any inquiries or complaints from consumers

regarding the availability of the ASCII-format.

5. Furthermore, the Commission concludes that there is no prospect of a resurgence in ASCII usage. Stakeholders, including the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association and the National Association of State Relay Administrators, point out that ASCII equipment is no longer commercially available, functional units are increasingly difficult to locate, and the format is incompatible with modern telephone networks. Because of these realities, the record reflects unanimous support for the rule's elimination from both providers and consumer advocacy groups that acknowledge the technology is obsolete.

6. *The Commission also deletes the second sentence of § 64.604(b)(1) of the Commission's rules which currently states:* "Other forms of TRS are not subject to this requirement." As noted in the NPRM, because the first sentence of the revised provision explicitly makes clear that the Baudot rule applies only to "TTY-based relay service," the second sentence is unnecessary surplusage.

7. *Benefits and Costs.* The record affirms the Commission's tentative conclusion that the cost savings for TRS providers far outweigh the negligible burdens of transitioning the few, if any, remaining ASCII users. Maintaining the ASCII obligation imposes ongoing software and network compatibility costs that yield no consumer benefit and needlessly burden the TRS Fund. Removing this mandate allows providers to redirect vital resources toward improving modern, widely used relay technologies, such as Real-Time Text (RTT), Internet-Protocol Relay, and Video Relay Service. The Commission concludes that eliminating this requirement provides administrative and financial relief. By freeing providers from maintaining obsolete hardware platforms, providers can more easily execute necessary network upgrades.

8. The record demonstrates that the number of consumers impacted by this change is effectively zero. To the extent any legacy users remain, the record shows that the transition process will be seamless and straightforward. Switching from ASCII to Baudot does not require the purchase of new equipment; a TTY user will only need to change a setting on the user's existing TTY device, because most TTYs automatically default to Baudot unless specifically configured to ASCII-only. Providers have affirmed their readiness to assist any affected users to ensure a seamless migration to Baudot or other modern

platforms. Because users can transition simply by adjusting their device settings, and providers will offer technical support, the Commission finds that mandating providers to supply new Baudot devices at their own expense is unnecessary.

9. The Commission concludes that eliminating the ASCII requirement is a targeted, common-sense reform that modernizes TRS regulations. The substantial benefits of reduced network complexity, hardware cost savings, and the ability to invest in modern technologies unequivocally outweigh the minimal costs of transitioning remaining ASCII users.

10. *Deleting the Definition of ASCII.* The Commission also deletes the definition of ASCII from the TRS rules. Under the Administrative Procedure Act, when an agency for good cause finds that notice and public comment "are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest," it need not follow notice and comment procedures before modifying or repealing rules. Prior notice and comment are "unnecessary" when "the administrative rule is a routine determination, insignificant in nature and impact, and inconsequential to the industry and to the public."

11. The definition of ASCII was only relevant to two provisions of this subpart F in Part 64 of the Commission rules. First, § 64.607(b)(2) of the Commission's rules, concerned the availability of text telephones using ASCII, which the Commission eliminated by Direct Final Rule. Second, in this item, the Commission deletes the only other reference to ASCII. The Commission therefore finds good cause to conclude that notice and comment procedures are unnecessary and would not serve any useful purpose because the term ASCII no longer needs to be defined in this portion of the rules and its deletion is inconsequential.

Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

12. As required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended, the Commission incorporated an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) in its NPRM, released in June 2025. The Commission sought written public comment on the proposals in the NPRM, including comment on the IRFA. No comments were filed addressing the IRFA.

Need for, and Objectives of, the Rules

13. In the *Order*, the Commission amends its rules to eliminate the requirement that TTY-based relay service providers offer users the service in the ASCII format, as it has become an

outdated and infrequently used format. TTY-based TRS is a text-based relay service. To make a call, a TTY user calls a TRS center and types the number of the person he or she wishes to call. A Communications Assistant at the relay center then makes a voice telephone call to the other party to the call, and relays the call back and forth between the parties by speaking what a text user types, and typing what a voice telephone user speaks.

14. In addition to the near-obsolence of the ASCII format, the Commission takes these steps because TTY users also have access to Baudot format, which is more commonly used. At present, there are only two providers of TTY-based telecommunications relay service, and usage of ASCII-format TTY totaled less than 100 minutes during three months in 2022, with less than 10 users placing calls in any month. Based on these reports, it appears that total ASCII usage of TTY-based TRS was limited to approximately 0.01% of total TTY-based TRS minutes for that period, while Baudot format TTY would account for the remaining TTY-based TRS minutes. Furthermore, retaining the requirement to support ASCII-format TTY-based TRS limits the ability of TTY-based TRS providers to upgrade and improve their networks for delivery of enhanced services. Eliminating the ASCII-support requirement will ultimately benefit both TTY-based TRS users and providers by facilitating network upgrades by providers while TTY-based TRS users can continue communicating with Baudot-format TTY or other forms of text-based TRS.

Summary of Significant Issues Raised by Public Comments in Response to the IRFA

15. No comments were filed addressing the impact of the proposed rules on small entities.

Response to Comments by the Chief Counsel for the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy (SBA)

16. The Chief Counsel did not file any comments in response to the proposed rules in this proceeding.

Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Rules Will Apply

17. The rules adopted in the *Order* will apply to small entities in the industries identified in the chart below by their six-digit North American Industry Classification System codes and corresponding SBA size standard. Where available, the Commission also provides additional information

regarding the number of potentially affected entities in the identified industries below.

Regulated industry (footnotes specify potentially affected entities within a regulated industry where applicable)	NAICS code	SBA size standard	Total firms	Total small firms	% Small firms
All Other Telecommunications	517810	\$40 million	1,673	1,007	60.19

Description of Economic Impact and Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping and Other Compliance Requirements for Small Entities

18. The changes made in the *Order* would not impose new or modified reporting, recordkeeping, or other compliance obligations on certain small entities that provide TTY-based TRS. Currently, there are only two providers of TTY-based TRS. To facilitate a transition to TTY-based TRS using the Baudot format, for consumers without access to broadband services, the Commission sought comment on whether to require small and other TTY-based TRS providers to provide information about State equipment distribution programs that make Baudot-format TTY-devices available, where available. It also sought comment on whether to require TRS providers to make available a Baudot-format TTY device to ASCII-format TTY users, without cost to the user. The Commission considered requiring providers to issue free Baudot-compatible devices, but the record demonstrated that switching from ASCII to Baudot does not require new TTY equipment, a user need only change a setting on the TTY device. After developing a record, the Commission determined that no additional obligations needed to be placed on entities that provide TTY-based TRS.

Discussion of Steps Taken To Minimize the Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities, and Significant Alternatives Considered

19. The amendment to the Commission's rules governing TRS is designed to facilitate upgrades to providers' networks by eliminating the

requirement to support rarely-used ASCII format. This amendment would only affect two TTY-based relay service providers and a handful of ASCII-format TTY users, who account for a very small number of TTY-based TRS call minutes. The Commission considered requiring TRS providers to incur the costs of making Baudot-format TTY devices available given the small number of ASCII-format TTY users. However, the record demonstrated that switching from ASCII to Baudot only requires changing a device setting. By removing this ASCII mandate, TTY-based TRS providers are relieved of the financial and operational costs required to support obsolete technology, thereby facilitating network upgrades without countervailing transition costs.

Ordering Clauses

20. Pursuant to sections 1, 4(i), 4(j), and 225 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 151, 154(i), 154(j), 225, that the *Order* is *adopted*, and the Commission's rules are *amended*.

21. The *Order* shall be effective October 13, 2026.

22. The Office of the Managing Director, Performance Evaluation and Records Management, *sent* a copy of the *Order* in a report to be sent to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

23. The Commission's Office of the Secretary, *shall send* a copy of the *Order*, including the Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, to the Chief Counsel for the SBA Office of Advocacy.

List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 64

Communications, Communications common carriers, Communications equipment, Individuals with disabilities, Telecommunications.

Federal Communications Commission.

Marlene Dortch,
Secretary.

Final Rules

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Federal Communications Commission amends 47 CFR part 64 as follows:

PART 64—MISCELLANEOUS RULES RELATING TO COMMON CARRIERS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 64 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 47 U.S.C. 151, 152, 154, 201, 202, 217, 218, 220, 222, 225, 226, 227, 227b, 228, 251(a), 251(e), 254(k), 255, 262, 276, 403(b)(2)(B), (c), 616, 620, 716, 1401–1473, unless otherwise noted; Pub. L. 115–141, Div. P, sec. 503, 132 Stat. 348, 1091; Pub. L. 117–338, 136 Stat. 6156.

§ 64.601 [Amended]

■ 2. Amend § 64.601 by removing paragraph (a)(7), and redesignating paragraphs (a)(8) through (a)(62) as paragraphs (a)(7) through (a)(61).

■ 3. Amend § 64.604 by revising paragraph (b)(1) to read as follows:

§ 64.604 Mandatory minimum standards.

* * * * *

(b) *Technical Standards*—(1) *Baudot*. TTY-based relay service shall be capable of communicating with Baudot format.

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[FR Doc. 2026–18478 Filed 9–9–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712–01–P