TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY

February 28, 1994



Telephone Interference Survey

Background

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) receives 25,000 complaints per year from individuals who are unable to use their telephones because nearby radio stations interfere with the proper operation of the telephones. Whenever the radio stations are on the air, the telephones pick up their transmissions which then override any ongoing telephone conversation.

The FCC's Field Operations Bureau (FOB) has done an informal survey to obtain information about telephone interference such as:

- -which telephones are affected
- -what type transmitting stations are involved
- -the power levels at which the stations were transmitting
- -whether commonly available filters would be effective in eliminating the interference
- -whether specially designed telephones would be effective in eliminating the interference

In setting forth the results of its informal survey, FOB emphasizes that, because this survey is based on a random sample it cannot be claimed that identical results would be derived under scientific surveying and testing, nor should the results be construed as FCC endorsement or criticism of any particular manufacturer's product. Rather, FOB believes these results to be a good "first look" at the problem.

Procedure

Thirty-five FCC field offices across the country participated in the survey. Each office was to choose three recent complaints of telephone interference on a random basis, and then to investigate the complaints.

At the transmitting station FOB staff would determine the type of station (i.e., amateur, citizens band, broadcast, etc.), measure the station power, and obtain information on antenna height, antenna gain, and distance from the complainant.

At the complainant's location, FOB would disconnect all telephones, take them to a chosen telephone jack, and plug them in one at a time while the station was transmitting. FOB would then record which telephones received interference and which did not.

FOB also tested the effectiveness of several commercially-available telephone filters, connecting the filters to telephones which were receiving interference while the radio station was transmitting.

Finally, FOB connected "bulletproof" telephones to the telephone jacks and observed whether these telephones received interference. A "bulletproof" telephone is one that is specially designed to be immune to interference.

Findings

Types of Transmitting Stations

FOB inspected 108 transmitting stations which were involved in the telephone interference complaints, as follows:

Citizens Band	47
Amateur	27
AM Broadcast	23
FM Broadcast	10
International Broadcast	1

Power Levels

The power levels of the radio transmitting stations varied from two watts to half a million watts. One-third of the transmitting stations operated with less than ten watts, and one-third of the interfering stations were broadcast stations using between 3000 and half a million watts. Attachment 1 lists the power levels of the transmitting stations.

Types of Telephones

FOB tested 241 telephones found in the complainants' residences for interference. Of the 241 telephones 68 percent received interference. Attachment 2 lists the telephones tested. FOB did not observe interference on 32 percent of the telephones it tested. These telephones are listed in Attachment 3.

Types of Filters

FOB tested the effectiveness of the AT&T Z100B1 filter on 138 telephones receiving interference. After connecting the filter to the telephones, 62 percent of the telephones continued to receive interference. The filter did eliminate interference on 38 percent of the telephones. A number of other filters were also tested on 82 telephones receiving interference. As a group these filters eliminated interference on 29 percent of the telephones. They did not eliminate interference on 71 percent of the telephones. Attachment 4 lists the filters which eliminated the interference.

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY POWER LEVELS OF INTERFERENCE SOURCES

è	UNKNOWN		2 sources
	2 watts		4 sources
	3 watts		7 sources
	4 watts		14 sources
	5 watts		7 sources
	6 watts		1 source
	7 watts		4 sources
	12 watts		2 sources
	26 watts		1 source
	30 watts		1 source
	35 watts		1 source
	50 watts		1 source
	53 watts		1 source
	54 watts		1 source
	57 watts		1 source
	75 watts		1 source
	80 watts		1 source
	100 watts		5 sources
	101 watts		1 source
	110 watts		2 sources
	114 watts		1 source
	131 watts		1 source
	150 watts		1 source
	160 watts		1 source
•	200 watts		1 source
	250 watts		1 source
	438 watts		1 source
	462 watts	*1	1 source
	500 watts		3 sources
	600 watts		1 source
	800 watts		1 source
	1,000 watts		3 sources
	1,500 watts		2 sources
	3,000 watts		2 sources
	5,000 watts		5 sources
	8,000 watts		1 source
	10,000 watts		4 sources
	16,000 watts		1 source
	25,000 watts		1 source
	50,000 watts		11 sources
	51,000 watts		4 sources
	54,000 watts		1 source
	100,000 watts		1 source
	500,000 watts		1 source

Total sources: 108

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY TELEPHONES RECEIVING INTERFERENCE

6-	fil	1	power	att	oth	fcc	make	model
fo	N	ix Ama	800	Y	Y	Y	SEARS	34505
DL			4	N	N	1	SEARS	SR-2000
LV	И	CB	100		14		SOUND DESIGN	7255 AR
KI	И	FM	3000	N		Y		7339 IVY
TP	Y	CB	3	N	N	¥	SOUNDESIGN BELL	FCC 2555
NA	Y	VWV	100	Y	Y		SOUTHWESTERN BELL	FREEDOM PHONE
BE	N	CB	4		N		SOUTHWESTERN BELL	FREEDOM PHONE FC 2570
ST	Y	CB	75	N	И	Y	SOUTHWESTERN BELL	
BS	N	MA	10000	Y	N		SOUTHWESTERN BELL	FT-325
SF	N	MA	50000				STROMBERG	IMAGE 1 AND IMAGE 2 DTMF
ST	Y	FM	51000	N	N	Y	TECHNICO	TT-2201
SJ	N	CB	26	N		Y	TELEFONICA HISPANO AMERICAN	TXE-1
SJ	N	CB	7	N		Y	TELEFONICA HISPANO AMERICAN	TXE-1
TP	N	CB	3	N	N	Y	TELKO	221
ST	Y	CB	4	N	N	Y	THOMAS	PP9D NOSTALGIA PHONE
FE	N	AΜ	50000	Y			TIME LIFE (MADE IN TALWAN)	(NONE)
DS	N	AM	5000	Y	Y	Y	TISONIC	PT-91
LV	Y	CB	5	N	N		ULTRSONIC	019
KC	N	FM	8000	N			UNIDEN	TRIMLINE
FE	N	ΛМ	50000	Y			UNISONIC	(NONE)
AL	Y	MA	5000	N	N	N	UNISONIC	(NONE)
VB	Ŷ	CB	30	Y			UNISONIC	6434
BM	N	CB	4	N	N	Y	UNISONIC	9370
PL	Y	AM	5000	Y	Y	Y	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(NONE)
DT	Ñ	ΛM	438	Y		Y	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(NONE) ROTARY DIAL PHONE
DT	N	ΛM	438	073		666	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(NONE) ROTARY DIAL PHONE
NF	N	AMA	1500	Y	Y	Y		ÀS543H-62587-TE-T
PA	N	λMA	110	N	1000	Ÿ	WESTERN ELECTRIC	CS 2500 DMG 84121

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY TELEPHONES RECEIVING INTERFERENCE

					8			1 1
fo	fil	ix	power	att	oth	fcc	make	model
PO	Ñ	AΜ	50000	Y	N		GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9051LRA
MΛ	N	CB	. 6	N			GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9166B
	N	ΛM	50000	Y		Y	GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9166B
CG	X.	СВ	4	N		Y	GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9167N
	Ŋ	CB	2	Y		Y	GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9212BLB
KC	Y	CB	4	N	N		GENERAL ELECTRIC	29243
I,V DT	N	λM	438				GENERAL FLECTRIC	2-9243C
KC	N	FM	8000	N			GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9355A
LV	Y	CB	5	N	N		GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9356
VB	N	AMA	100	Y			GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9400C
		FM	54000	•			GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-94050N
HL	N	FM	54000				GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-94050A
HL	N		54000				GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-94050A
HL	N	FM FM	54000				GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-94050N
HL	N		54000	N			GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9420A
MA	И	CB	100000	N			GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9675h
HU	N	F 1'1	100000	Y	Y	Y	GENERAL, ELECTRIC	2-9892A
PS	Y	CB	2	Y	Ŷ	Ŷ	GENERAL ELECTRIC	2-9895A
DV	И	CB		N	N	•	GENERAL ELECTRIC	29270 A
LV	N	CB	4		14		GENERAL ELECTRIC	7-4700A
DV	N	MΛ	5000	Y	v		GENERAL ELECTRIC	CRYSTAL CLEAR PLUS
LA	N	MA	5000	Y	A	Y	GENERAL ELECTRIC	MEMORY MODEL 21
BF	И	CB	5	И		1	GENERAL ELECTRIC	NO 29420A
MA	N	CB	6	Y	22		GENERAL ELECTRIC	SPEAKER PHONE 2-9375F
SD	N	CB	54	N	N		GENERAL ELECTRIC	TL-5/TPS
CG	N	AMA	1500				GENERAL ELECTRIC	58821
PO	N	AMA	35	Y	N		GTE	7400
ST	Y	FM	51000	N	И	Y	GTE	AUTO ELEC -WALL PHONE
GI	N	AMA	101	Y			GTE	AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC
GI	N	AMA	101	Y			GTE	
PL	N	AM	5000		N		IMA	(NONE)
AL	Y	AM	5000	N	N	Y	ITT (CORINTH TELECOM. CORP)	3480 FEATURE TELEFITORE
DS	Ŋ	FM	3000	Y	N	Y	LENOX SOUND	P4310
PL	N	λM	5000				LLOYDS (PHONE-CLOCK-RADIO)	T510
HU	N	CB	110	N			LONE STAR	912
Pλ	N	CB	4			Y	LONE STAR	TRIMLINE
	N	CB	5	N	N		LOTEL	5020 DUEL LINE
BS			5	N	N		LOTEL	5020 DUEL LINE
BS	N	CB	131	N	3.5		NORTHERN TELECOM	FCC REG #AB6982-68817-TE-T
FE	N	AMA		Y	Y		NORTHERN TELECOM	NT3LOOAA
VN	N	FM	51000		N	Y	NORTHERN TELECOM	SYMPHONY 3000
DT	Y	CB	5	Y		Ŷ	NORTHWESTERN BELL	"EASY TOUCH"
PS	N	AMA	200	N	И	I.	NORTHWESTERN BELL	BASIC TGT 51450
SD	Y	CB	12	N			PAC BELL	TR 2203 CHAC
LV	N	CB	4	N	N		PACTEL	FE5700
PO	Y	AM	50000	N	N		PANASONIC	EASA-PHONE VA-8205
DS	N	אאא	500	N	Y		PANASONIC	EASA-PHONE-AUTO LOGIC
NY	N	AMA	100	Y	Y			EASE PHONE KX-TX175-B
BS	N	AM	10000	N	И		PANASONIC	KX-T-2420
TP	Y	CB	3	N	N	Y	PANASONIC PANASONIC	KX-T-3155
SF	Y	AMA	250	Y	N	1/	PANASONIC	KX-T2315
DV	N	λMΛ	114	N.	· Y	Y		RX-T2315
DL	N	CB	4	Y	Y	Y	PANASONIC PANASONIC	KX-T2355
PO	Y	MA	50000	Y	Y			KX-T2355
CG	N	AMA	1500	И		Y	PANASONIC	KX-T2622 EASAPHONE
ST	Y	MΛ	10000	N	N	Y	PANASONIC	RX-T3145
HL	N	λMλ	462	99	1221		PANASONIC	KXT 2388
OR	N	ΛM	50000	N	A		PANASONIC	3900
KI	N	CB	5	N	-		PHONE MATE	3950
NF	N	CB	7	Y	N	Y	PHONEMATE	4650
GI	Y	MMA	101	N			PHONEMATE	209 DUCPHONE 43-617A
BS	N	AM	10000	N	N	200	RADIO SHACK	43-384
DS	N	FM	3000			Y	RADIO SHACK	43-384
PS	Y	CB	5			274	RADIO SHACK	43-625 DUOFONE 202
DT	N	CB	3	5500		Y	RADIO SHACK	43.430
TP	Y	CB	4	N	1912	Y	RADIO SHACK	DUOPHONE TAD-250
PO	Y	MΛ	50000	X	N		RADIO SHACK	ET 200
OR	N	CB	4	Y			RADIO SHACK	TA S 855
LR	N	CB		N			SANYO	3293 4761550 SR 3000
AT	N	CB	160	N		Y	SEARS	34403
KI	N	FM	3000	N			SEARS	

fo=office fil-filter already attached? ix=ix source (AM/FM/CB/AMAteur/International Broadc. att=AT&T Z 100 Bl filter eliminate ix? oth=other filters eliminate ix? fcc=FCC 'bulletproof' telephones free from ix?

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY TELEPHONES RECEIVING INTERFERENCE

						11,,,,		- 1
_	6:1	1	nous	att	oth	fcc	make	model
fo	fil	ix	power	N	N	Y	(UNKNOWN)	(UNKNOWN)
DL	N	λMλ	800	N	N	Ŷ	(UNKNOWN)	(UNKNOWN)
YL	N	CB	4		N	Ϋ́	AT&T	(NONE)
PL	N	CB	2	N		Y	ATET	(NONE) (FCC AS593M-702
DT	N	CB	5	N	N	1	AT&T	100
LR	N	MΛ	1000	Y				1306
KI	N	FM	3000	И			ATET	1504
KI	N	AMA	100	N .			AT&T	150E
DV	N	AM	5000	Y	Y	Y	ATET	1510
NY	N	CB	3	Y	Y		AT&T	1521
PO	N	MMA	35	Y	N		AT&T	1532
		λM	10000	Y	N		AT&T	1611
BS	N	AMA	53	N	N		AT&T	1618
GI	N	CB	5	N		Y	AT&T	210
DL	Y		100	N			AT&T	
KI	N	AMA	100	N			ATST	210
KI	N	ΛMΛ	5000			Y	ATGT	210
DS	N	AM	500	N	Y	-	ATGT	210
DS	Y	VWV	3	Y	Ñ	Y	ATGT	210
NF	Y	CB		Y	Y	Ŷ	AT&T	530
PL	N	AMA	1000	Y	Ý	Ŷ	AT&T	5455
DL	N	AMA	800		1	*	ATET	610
GI	N	AMA	101	N		Y	ATGT	710
BF	N	AMA	100	N		1	ATET	720
KI	N	CB	5	N				720
CG	N	AMA	1000	Y		Y	AT&T	725
KC	Y	CB	4	N		Y	ATGT	725
GI	N	AMA	101	N			ATGT	732
PA	N	CB	3	N		Y	AT&T .	732
	N	AMA	462	N	N		AT&T	AOMORN 10451-TE-E
HL		AMA	600	N			ATGT	AS 550Z 71597
MA	Y		4	N			ATET	ASSS0Z-71597-TE-E
LR	Y	CB	50	N			AT&T	MODEL 1506
MA	N	AMA		.,	N		AT&T	MODEL 1506
DT	N	AM	438	9.7	N		ATGT	PRINCESS
NY	N	AM	25000	N		Y	AT&T	PRINCESS AS 550 Z-71
BM	N	CB	7	N	N		AT&T	SPKK REMOTE & ANS MAC
PA	N	CB	3	N		Y		SW204
PO	N	AM	50000	Y	Υ .		AT&T	TRIMLINE 210
BM	N	FM	16000	Y	N	Y	AT&T	TRIMLINE 210
	Y	AM	50000	N		Y	ATET	TRIMITINE 220
BF		CB	5	Y		Y	λT&T	TRIMLINE AS550Z-7159
DL	N	AMA	1500	Y	Y	Y	AT&T	AT-11
NF	N		10000	Ŷ	N	Y	AUDIOVOX	FAVORITE
ST	N	MA		Ŷ	N		BELL	TT 51490
PO	N	MA	50000			Y	BELL	
PL	N	MA	5000	N		_	BELL PHONES	100-5800
KI	N	CB		N	N	Y	BELL SOUTH	2000
AT	Y	CB	160		N		BELL SOUTH	227V
BS	N	MM	50000	Y	14		BELL SOUTH	473
DT	N	CB	3			10	BELL SOUTH	473
KI	N	CB	5	N		Y	BELL SOUTH	473
DS	N	AM	5000				BELL SOUTH	CWIMLA-61669-ANN
MA	N	AMA	600				BELL SOUTH	DFK-62W70687-TE-T
OR	N	AMA	100	N	Y		BELL SOUTH	HAC 572
AT	N	IB	500000	N		Y	BELL SOUTH	TP-201 L-10
PS	Y	AMA	150	N	N	Y		FAX-350
SF	N	MA	50000	Y			CANON	1610
PO	Y	AMA	500	Y			CODE-A-PHONE	25270-IY
LA	Y	MA	50000	N	N		COMDIAI.	VOICE EXPRESS
SF	Ñ	AM	50000				COMDIAL,	PR 1000
ST	N	CB	75	И	N	Y	CONVIL	PR 5001
λT	Y	CB		Y		Y	CONAIR	sw 2502
	N	CB	57	N	N		CONVIL	sw204
LV			5				CONAIR	5W2U1
TP	N	CB MMA	80		N		CONAIR	SW204A
BE	N	AM	50000	Y			CONAIR	TR1001
PO	N		51000	Ŷ	Y		CONTIRPHONE	PRIOD6
VΝ	N	FM	500	Ý	•		CONTIRPHONE	PRIMA SERIES
PO	Y	ΛMΛ	3		N	Y	CONTIRPHONE	SW-102 HEK-EB-200DSIHF-EX1
DT	N	CB			14	^	DELTA	HEK-FR-SOODSTUL-BYI
HL	N	λM	10000	N			FORTEL CORP	RECORD A CALL #2140
SD	N	CB	12	И	N		GENERAL ELECTRIC	12-MEMORY 2-9240A
SF	N	CB	2	14	14			/GR/AWAtour/Internations

fo=office fil=filter already attached? ix=ix source (AM/FH/CB/AMAteur/International att=ATRT 7 100 B1 filter eliminate ix? oth=other filters eliminate ix?

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY TELEPHONES NOT RECEIVING INTERFERENCE*

	6:14				mode1
off	filter	make			1316C
NF	Y	AT&T			1321
DL	N	AT&T	•		1323
SF	N	AT&T			5200
ИА	N	AT&T			5200
SF	N	λΤ&Τ			5400
BF	N	ТЭТ			5600
ST	N	AT&T			60921
PA	N	እ'T&T			700
CG	N	AT&T			
ST	N	AT&T			730
PΛ	N	AT&T			ANS MACHINE AS5 THA-60921-MT-E
PΛ	N	AT&T			
DL	N	АТ&Т		-	CS8702A
DL	Y	AT&T			NE-229A OLD DIAL STYLE
OR	N	AT&T			
BF	Y	λT&T			TRIMLINE
BM	N	BELL SOUTH			665 CORDLESS PHONE
HU	N	BELL SOUTH			HAE-701
OR	N	BELL SYSTEM			TRIMLINE
AL	N	COBRA			AN-8519
DT	N	COBRA	×	્રહા	ST-410
SD	N	CODE A PHONE			8100
AL	N	CONAIR CORP			XS2400
LV	N	CONAIR			CORPORATE AMERICA
BS	N	DAK INDUSTRIES			DAL-4000 AX
NF	Y	DAK INDUSTRIES			DK 4000 AX
CG	N	GANDALF			COMDIAL
AL	N	GENERAL ELECTRIC			2-9051LRB
KC	N	GENERAL ELECTRIC			2-9800B
BM	N	GTE	i i	•	(UNKNOWN)
ST	N	GTE			980 SLIMLINE
PS	N	ITT			183499-236
FE	N	ITT			500D
AN	N	ITT			RJ11C
AL	N	LENNOX SOUND			PH-319
HL	N	UNKNOWN (CHINA)			FCC #: GEZ 364-16521 TE-E
HL	N	NORTHERN TELECOM			SYMPHONY 1000
DV	N	NW BELL	15		FAVORITE PLUS DHT6CJ-14584-TE
BS	N	PANASONIC	ě		EASE PHONE-ONE LINE
HU	N	PANASONIC			GASA-PHONE
DV	N	PANASONIC			KX-T-3120
HL	N	PANASONIC			KXT-2355
KC	N	PHONEMATE			4300
ST	N	RADIO SHACK			43-368A
FE	N	RADIO SHACK			43-500
FE	N	RADIO SHACK			43-5018
DV	N	RADIO SHACK			43-621
OR	N	SEARS			329 34451750
DT	N	SEARS			34413
GI	N	SEARS			HAC 3466
ST	N	SEARS			SR 3000 SERIES
SF	N	SHARP			UX - 172
SF	N	SOUND DESIGN			AM/FM CLOCK RADIO PHONE
	0.25tees	and the second Table Committee and the second secon			

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY TELEPHONES NOT RECEIVING INTERFERENCE*

off	filter	make	model
AI.	N	SPECTRA PHONE	TL-4
DT	N	STC TELECORP INC	SOUNDDESIGN 7255
ST	N	TELECONCEPTS	(NONE)
NF	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(UNKNOWN)
BM	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(UNKNOWN)
DL	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(UNKNOWN)
KC	Y	WESTERN ELECTRIC	(UNKNOWN) "LA OLYMPIC PHONE"
LA	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	2554 BMPG-82103
PΛ	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	RB 1311 (ROTARY)
BS	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	TRIMLINE #CS 2224A
NF	Y	WESTERN ELECTRIC	TRIMLINE PHONE
NF	N	WESTERN ELECTRIC	INTERING FROM

FIELD OPERATIONS BUREAU TELEPHONE INTERFERENCE SURVEY OTHER FILTERS TESTED

K-COM RF-1	1
K COM RF1	3
RADIO SHACK-SNAPON	1
TCE	1
TCE536	2
TCE TP12	4
TEC RF1400	2
TII 931-W1	2

The filters listed here deserve further study. During the project, FOB found that these filters eliminated interference when tried in individual cases. However, because FOB did not use any of these filters in a sufficient number of cases, we cannot conclude whether any of them would be effective in eliminating interference most of the time.

Attachment 5

FCC BULLET PROOF PHONE

Manufactuer	Make	Address
Pro Distributors (\$79.95 plus shipping)	Western Electric Desk Model Touch Tone	2811 74th Street, Lubbock, TX 1-800 (658-2027)
TCE Labs		Rural Route 9 Box 243D New Branufels, TX 78133 (512 899-595

Note: All phones were refurbished, internally modified commerical units.

(\$49.95)

"Bulletproof Telephones"

The FCC tested "bulletproof" telephones at 52 locations where the individuals were receiving interference to their telephones. The "bulletproof" telephones eliminated interference at 96 percent of the locations.

Conclusions

The transmitting stations most likely to cause telephone interference are citizens band, amateur, and broadcast stations. Citizens band stations accounted for half the telephone interference cases. Amateur stations and broadcast stations accounted for the other half.

The power levels used by the radio transmitting station did not appear to be a significant factor in causing telephone interference. Power levels of 10 watts or less caused telephone interference in a third of the cases.

A large portion of the residential telephones appeared to be susceptible to interference from nearby radio transmitting stations. Although some telephones did not receive interference, the limited nature of the testing performed in conjunction with this survey would not support the conclusion that they would always reject interference.

Telephone interference filters cannot be relied upon to eliminate telephone interference: in two out of three cases in the test sample, they did not work. Manufacturers can design telephones to be interference free. "Bulletproof" telephones were immune from interference virtually all of the time.

A Final Note

Notwithstanding the 25,000 reports of telephone interference the FCC has received to date, it is FOB's experience that, as large as this number is, it probably represents only a fraction of the actual instances in which this interference occurs. Given the enormous numbers of instances in which this type of interference is experienced by consumers, it is our hope that this survey, notwithstanding its informality, will serve as a catalyst for affected parties to productively address and resolve this problem. As always, FOB remains ready to assist in that effort.



What to do if you have interference problems on your telephone from radio, TV stations or other sources.

Radio Frequency Interference

What is it? What causes it? Who's responsible? How to fix it.

Radio frequency energy comes primarily from radio and TV stations, amateur (ham) and citizens band radios, cordless and cellular telephones, and other devices that use radio transmitters.

This radio frequency energy can interfere with the normal operation of a telephone. It may cause you to hear radio stations or annoying sounds over your telephone.

It is normal for some radio frequency energy to be present on the telephone company outside wiring even though you may not hear anything in your telephone receiver. However, in unusual cases, audible interference present on the telephone company's wiring must be referred to the telephone company for correction.

You should be aware that if you call the telephone company and request a special inspection and the trouble is found in your wiring or telephone, the telephone company may charge you for a service call.

Contacting Telephone Manufacturers

You may wish to contact the manufacturer of your telephone directly. The manufacturer's telephone number can usually be found in the user's manual provided with the telephone or, in some cases, on the bottom of the telephone. Ask if the manufacturer provides a filter to solve your problem or has any other solution to eliminate the radio interference problem; also ask the manufacturer as to whether or not it charges for its services.

If you are unable to contact the manufacturer, most interference problems can be solved by performing the following three steps:

Step 1: Determining the source of the interference

By carefully listening on the telephone handset, you may be able to identify the source of the interference. The following table can help in this step.

Interference Source Characteristics

Amateur and Citizens Band Radio Speech switches on and off

and may be garbled

AM Radio

Music, speech

TV, FM Radio

Garbled music and speech

Cordless Telephone

Speech

If an amateur or citizens band radio transmitter is causing interference, the transmitter is probably located within a few blocks of your house. The transmitters may be identified by the outdoor antenna that they use. Most operators will be pleased to work with you towards a solution.

If you are experiencing interference from a radio or TV station, the station is probably operating within the law (rules are set forth by the Federal Communications Commission). The radio or TV station owners may be required to help you solve your interference problem depending, in part, on how far you live from the station. If the radio or TV station is not required to solve your interference problem, then it is your responsibility and this guide is intended to help you.

Other possible sources of interference include noise generated by fluorescent lights, light dimmers, and motors. Determine if the noise occurs only when such a device is turned on.

Step 2: Determining where the interference is being picked up

Radio interference usually enters your telephone through one or more of the following paths:

- the coiled handset cord of your telephone;
- line cord of your telephone;
- the telephone set;
- other telephone equipment;
- internal telephone wiring in your house;
- external wiring to your house.

A) To check the coiled handset cord, bundle the cord in your hand while listening to the telephone. Continue to listen to the telephone while stretching the handset cord out. If the interference is noticeably louder with the cord stretched out, the cord is acting like a radio antenna.

Also, try moving around the room with the handset cord stretched out. Avoid using cords longer than 10 feet if you are experiencing interference problems.

- B) Repeat the test described in Step 2-A on the line cord, the cord connecting the telephone to the wall jack. (Does not apply to wall telephones which have no line cord.)
- C) If you have a neighbor whose telephone operates normally, you may wish to consider borrowing your neighbor's telephone to see if it corrects your problem when plugged into your telephone jack. If the interference disappears, then your telephone may be too sensitive to the interference. Go to Step 3.
- D) To check the effect of other telephone equipment connected to your telephone line, such as answering machines, FAX machines, or computer modems, listen on the affected telephone while disconnecting and reconnecting all other telephone equipment one by one. (Do not disconnect an alarm system. This will send a false alarm that may cause you to be fined. Notify the alarm company if you suspect a problem in its equipment.) If the problem disappears when a given device is disconnected, then the source of the radio interference problem is associated with the device just taken off the line.
- E) To check the telephone wiring in the house, try plugging the telephone into different jacks in the house (if you have more than one jack). If the house wiring is picking up the interference, the noise level that you hear at each jack may vary.
- F) If the previous checks do not determine where the interference is being picked up, it may be occurring on the external wiring.

Step 3: Solving the problem

If, in Step 2, you have identified the handset cord, telephone line cord wiring, or your telephone as

the point of the interference, you may need to use a radio frequency interference filter (described below) or change your telephone to eliminate the interference. (See Step 2C.)

The application of a radio frequency interference filter is often an effective solution to correcting some interference problems. The following table gives examples of filters to use to eliminate the problem. They can all be easily installed on your telephone wiring without the use of tools.

Interference Source Filter

AM, Citizens Band, and Amateur Radio AT&T Z100B1 (Singleline telephone), or AT&T Z200A (4-line telephone)

Citizens Band Radio

Northern Telecom CB suppressor: NTOC03CA (Single-line telephone), or NTOB14AA (2-line telephone)

Amateur Radio

Snap-On Filter Choke: Radio Shack model 273-104

Check the supplier's return policy before you purchase any device to eliminate interference. Purchase the appropriate filters from telephone stores or local electronics stores, or contact the filter manufacturers directly. When using filters, carefully follow the directions for proper installation. Following are some additional hints:

- Place filters on all equipment identified in Step 2.
- For maximum effectiveness, place a telephone line cord filter next to the telephone, not at the wall jack.
- If one filter works, but some interference is still present, try two filters.

For FM and TV station interference, filtering may not correct the problem; use the shortest practical handset cord and avoid extending it. You may have to change your telephone. (See Step 2C.)