

such common carrier has an attributable interest. For the purposes of this subsection, two or fewer common officers or directors shall not by itself establish an attributable interest by a common carrier in a satellite cable programming vendor (or its parent company).

**(h) Exemptions for prior contracts**

**(1) In general**

Nothing in this section shall affect any contract that grants exclusive distribution rights to any person with respect to satellite cable programming and that was entered into on or before June 1, 1990, except that the provisions of subsection (c)(2)(C) shall apply for distribution to persons in areas not served by a cable operator.

**(2) Limitation on renewals**

A contract that was entered into on or before June 1, 1990, but that is renewed or extended after October 5, 1992, shall not be exempt under paragraph (1).

**(i) Definitions**

As used in this section:

(1) The term “satellite cable programming” has the meaning provided under section 605 of this title, except that such term does not include satellite broadcast programming.

(2) The term “satellite cable programming vendor” means a person engaged in the production, creation, or wholesale distribution for sale of satellite cable programming, but does not include a satellite broadcast programming vendor.

(3) The term “satellite broadcast programming” means broadcast video programming when such programming is retransmitted by satellite and the entity retransmitting such programming is not the broadcaster or an entity performing such retransmission on behalf of and with the specific consent of the broadcaster.

(4) The term “satellite broadcast programming vendor” means a fixed service satellite carrier that provides service pursuant to section 119 of title 17 with respect to satellite broadcast programming.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title VI, § 628, as added Pub. L. 102-385, § 19, Oct. 5, 1992, 106 Stat. 1494; amended Pub. L. 104-104, title III, § 301(h), Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 117; Pub. L. 115-141, div. P, title IV, § 402(d), Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 1089.)

**Editorial Notes**

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (e)(2), was in the original “this Act”, meaning act June 19, 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064, known as the Communications Act of 1934, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 609 of this title and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsecs. (g), (j). Pub. L. 115-141 redesignated subsec. (j) as (g), transferred subsec. (g) to appear after subsec. (f), and struck out former subsec. (g). Prior to amendment, text of subsec. (g) read as follows: “The Commission shall, beginning not later than 18 months after promulgation of the regulations required by subsection (c), annually report to Congress on the status of

competition in the market for the delivery of video programming.”

1996—Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 104-104 added subsec. (j).

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 60 days after Oct. 5, 1992, see section 28 of Pub. L. 102-385, set out as an Effective Date of 1992 Amendment note under section 325 of this title.

**§ 549. Competitive availability of navigation devices**

**(a) Commercial consumer availability of equipment used to access services provided by multichannel video programming distributors**

The Commission shall, in consultation with appropriate industry standard-setting organizations, adopt regulations to assure the commercial availability, to consumers of multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, of converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment used by consumers to access multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, from manufacturers, retailers, and other vendors not affiliated with any multichannel video programming distributor. Such regulations shall not prohibit any multichannel video programming distributor from also offering converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment used by consumers to access multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, to consumers, if the system operator’s charges to consumers for such devices and equipment are separately stated and not subsidized by charges for any such service.

**(b) Protection of system security**

The Commission shall not prescribe regulations under subsection (a) which would jeopardize security of multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, or impede the legal rights of a provider of such services to prevent theft of service.

**(c) Waiver**

The Commission shall waive a regulation adopted under subsection (a) for a limited time upon an appropriate showing by a provider of multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, or an equipment provider, that such waiver is necessary to assist the development or introduction of a new or improved multichannel video programming or other service offered over multichannel video programming systems, technology, or products. Upon an appropriate showing, the Commission shall grant any such waiver request within 90 days of any application filed under this subsection, and such waiver shall be effective for all service providers and products in that category and for all providers of services and products.

**(d) Avoidance of redundant regulations**

**(1) Commercial availability determinations**

Determinations made or regulations prescribed by the Commission with respect to

commercial availability to consumers of converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment used by consumers to access multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, before February 8, 1996, shall fulfill the requirements of this section.

**(2) Regulations**

Nothing in this section affects section 64.702(e) of the Commission's regulations (47 C.F.R. 64.702(e)) or other Commission regulations governing interconnection and competitive provision of customer premises equipment used in connection with basic common carrier communications services.

**(e) Sunset**

The regulations adopted under this section shall cease to apply when the Commission determines that—

- (1) the market for the multichannel video programming distributors is fully competitive;
- (2) the market for converter boxes, and interactive communications equipment, used in conjunction with that service is fully competitive; and
- (3) elimination of the regulations would promote competition and the public interest.

**(f) Commission's authority**

Nothing in this section shall be construed as expanding or limiting any authority that the Commission may have under law in effect before February 8, 1996.

(June 19, 1934, ch. 652, title VI, §629, as added Pub. L. 104-104, title III, §304, Feb. 8, 1996, 110 Stat. 125.)

PART IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

**§ 551. Protection of subscriber privacy**

**(a) Notice to subscriber regarding personally identifiable information; definitions**

(1) At the time of entering into an agreement to provide any cable service or other service to a subscriber and at least once a year thereafter, a cable operator shall provide notice in the form of a separate, written statement to such subscriber which clearly and conspicuously informs the subscriber of—

- (A) the nature of personally identifiable information collected or to be collected with respect to the subscriber and the nature of the use of such information;
- (B) the nature, frequency, and purpose of any disclosure which may be made of such information, including an identification of the types of persons to whom the disclosure may be made;
- (C) the period during which such information will be maintained by the cable operator;
- (D) the times and place at which the subscriber may have access to such information in accordance with subsection (d); and
- (E) the limitations provided by this section with respect to the collection and disclosure of information by a cable operator and the right of the subscriber under subsections (f) and (h) to enforce such limitations.

In the case of subscribers who have entered into such an agreement before the effective date of this section, such notice shall be provided within 180 days of such date and at least once a year thereafter.

(2) For purposes of this section, other than subsection (h)—

(A) the term “personally identifiable information” does not include any record of aggregate data which does not identify particular persons;

(B) the term “other service” includes any wire or radio communications service provided using any of the facilities of a cable operator that are used in the provision of cable service; and

(C) the term “cable operator” includes, in addition to persons within the definition of cable operator in section 522 of this title, any person who (i) is owned or controlled by, or under common ownership or control with, a cable operator, and (ii) provides any wire or radio communications service.

**(b) Collection of personally identifiable information using cable system**

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a cable operator shall not use the cable system to collect personally identifiable information concerning any subscriber without the prior written or electronic consent of the subscriber concerned.

(2) A cable operator may use the cable system to collect such information in order to—

- (A) obtain information necessary to render a cable service or other service provided by the cable operator to the subscriber; or
- (B) detect unauthorized reception of cable communications.

**(c) Disclosure of personally identifiable information**

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a cable operator shall not disclose personally identifiable information concerning any subscriber without the prior written or electronic consent of the subscriber concerned and shall take such actions as are necessary to prevent unauthorized access to such information by a person other than the subscriber or cable operator.

(2) A cable operator may disclose such information if the disclosure is—

- (A) necessary to render, or conduct a legitimate business activity related to, a cable service or other service provided by the cable operator to the subscriber;
- (B) subject to subsection (h), made pursuant to a court order authorizing such disclosure, if the subscriber is notified of such order by the person to whom the order is directed;
- (C) a disclosure of the names and addresses of subscribers to any cable service or other service, if—

(i) the cable operator has provided the subscriber the opportunity to prohibit or limit such disclosure, and

(ii) the disclosure does not reveal, directly or indirectly, the—

- (I) extent of any viewing or other use by the subscriber of a cable service or other service provided by the cable operator, or
- (II) the nature of any transaction made by the subscriber over the cable system of the cable operator; or