

## FCC Approves Tighter Rules for Cellular Signal Boosters

By Joseph Panechar On Feb 20 2013 – 4:43pm

Washington — The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unanimously approved stricter regulations to prevent fixed and mobile cellular-signal boosters from interfering with cellular carriers' networks.

The vote marks the conclusion of a near-two-year rulemaking process that started in early 2010 when the [FCC launched an inquiry into whether boosters should be banned or regulated more](#). The FCC later came down on the side of more regulation and sought industry comments included in the new regulations. Under the new regulations, consumer signal boosters sold for use in the U.S. of March 1, 2014, by suppliers, distributors and retailers will have to comply with [new technical specifications and rules adopted today](#). Consumers who buy the new boosters, or who already own a booster, must get their carrier's permission to use the device and must register the booster with the carrier. Existing owners will not be allowed to use their booster without permission.

All four nationwide carriers and many rural and regional carriers have consented to the use of boosters as long as the boosters meet the new technical specifications, the FCC said.

Even if a booster meets the new standards, the FCC noted, it cannot be used if it nonetheless interferes with a cellular network.

No booster currently on the market meets the new specifications, the FCC told TWICE, but carriers could opt to grandfather them in if they so choose. Carriers have not said whether they will approve the continued use of any current booster, the FCC noted.

The FCC also outlined new rules for industrial signal boosters that cover large areas such as stadiums, airports and tunnels.

"Signal boosters not only help consumers improve coverage where signal strength is weak, but they also aid public safety first responders by extending wireless access in hard-to serve areas such as tunnels, subways and garages," the FCC noted.

The new rules are supported by carriers represented by CTIA-The Wireless Association, the Rural Telecommunications Group (RTG), and the Competitive Carriers Association (CCA), the FCC noted.

Booster maker Wilson Electronics was ecstatic. Wilson COO Joe Banos said the rules "will eliminate poorly designed products that currently plague the market and have been a source of cell site interference." The ruling "is a major victory not only for our industry but also for the end users who benefit from added levels of safety, security and satisfaction with their service through the use of signal boosters," he continued. All parties found a solution to an issue "that once seemed insurmountable," he noted.

For her part, Karen Reynolds, president/CEO of booster maker Wi-Ex, stated that "since we have always used technology to protect the provider's network, today's FCC report and order validates our technology

and products and encourages us to continue research and investment in the area of enhancing the cell phone signal.”

“With millions of boosters already enhancing the provider’s signal for municipal, state and federal governments, military installations, security agencies, businesses, healthcare facilities and most importantly consumers, with our zBoost products we see firsthand the positive impact of cell phone signal boosters for consumers and businesses.”