

**FHH Telecom Law**  
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**Earth Stations Weigh Anchor, Set Sail**

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The FCC has announced service and licensing rules for satellite earth stations on vessels (ESVs) in the C and Ku bands. For many years ESVs have operated under a succession of waivers and temporary authorizations. The new rules should provide regulatory certainty to ESV providers, while offering some protection to other spectrum users.

ESV operators will share the C-band (3700-4200 MHz and 5925-6425 MHz) with fixed terrestrial and fixed satellite services. The rules subject ESVs to coordination requirements, as well as power limits. A vessel that leaves its coordinated route will have to shut down operation. The amount of spectrum available to an ESV operator is limited, and ESVs will not be permitted on vessels below a certain gross tonnage. (Details are not yet available as we go to press.)

ESVs in Ku-band (14.0-14.5 GHz and 11.7-12.2 GHz) will not have to coordinate with fixed terrestrial services, whose operations there are limited. At 14.0-14.5 GHz, however, ESV coordination is required near certain federal government earth stations. As in C-band, power limitations will apply.

The rules require applicants for ESV licenses to demonstrate that they are capable of controlling all aspects of their ESV network and able to comply with the applicable technical parameters. The license term is fifteen years. Applications will include Internet services to cruise ships.