

A C-SPANners' guide to answering questions about Must Carry

On October 5, 1992, the House and Senate enacted into law, over President Bush's veto, the "Cable Television Consumer Protection Act of 1992."

As a result, several areas of the cable business have been regulated. For example, the law permits regulation of basic cable rates of cable systems. The law goes so far as to set customer service standards, consumer equipment compatibility regulations and myriad other stringent standards and regulatory provisions.

The new Cable Act also includes a provision that says a cable operator "must carry" local broadcast channels. It is this section of the statute that potentially most impacts C-SPAN.

What is "Must Carry?"

Under the new law, **Broadcasters, or over-the-air delivered services like your local network affiliates and area independent broadcasters, are given must carry rights.** A station is entitled to must carry on all cable systems within the station's television market (ADI); there are no viewership requirements.

For the most part, cable operators already carry such channels, however, in many tv markets the law will require operators to carry **more** local broadcasters than they do now. Because cable operators have limited space to add channels, some systems will be forced to drop some cable services (satellite delivered services) to make room to put on the so called "must carry" stations. These "must carry" rules go into effect on June 2, 1993.

It is possible that, C-SPAN or C-SPAN 2 may be dropped or have their hours of carriage cut-back to make room for these "must carry" stations.

On Tuesday, June 1, at 8:00 pm ET, C-SPAN will air a live, ninety-minute viewer call-in program focusing on the "must carry" issue and its impact on cable subscribers.

How is C-SPAN responding to this situation?

We are working to limit potential carriage cut-backs in several ways.

1. C-SPAN is partner to a legal challenge to the "must carry" requirements. This portion of the statute faces a constitutional challenge before the U.S. Supreme Court in the Fall or early Spring. The challenge is based on a cable operators' First Amendment rights.
2. The Sales staff is working with affiliates on behalf of C-SPAN's carriage concerns and requirements.

What can you do to help?

You may get calls from viewers asking questions and registering complaints regarding changes in C-SPAN carriage. **Please fill out the attached form and forward the information to Sales.**

It is imperative we gather complete information on each individual situation. Please get the following data from any contacts you make regarding a change in C-SPAN carriage.

Name of Community and the Name of the Cable System
Name, Address, and Telephone #
Specifics of the situation: Is it C-SPAN or C-SPAN 2? What are the exact changes?
How was the viewer notified of this change? What replaces or shares with C-SPAN/C-SPAN 2?
Any comments.

What can C-SPANners tell viewers about these situations?

Everything written above is for the public.

You should also let viewers know that:

All changes in their cable systems channel line-up are a local decision, made by the cable operator and not C-SPAN.

The changes are the result of federal legislation and FCC established guidelines regulating the cable industry .

Encourage the viewer to call and write their local cable system operator to voice their displeasure over the changes affecting C-SPAN.

Sales will be following-up with all affected systems to try to reverse changes in carriage

Name of Viewer:

Date called:

Address:

Telephone number: _____

Name of Cable System:

Situation: Cutting Hours of C-SPAN _____
 Cutting Hours of C-SPAN2 _____
 Dropping C-SPAN _____
 Dropping C-SPAN 2 _____

info taken by: _____
(name)

*PLEASE DROP OFF TO SALES . . . A.S.A.P

Name of Viewer:

Date called:

Address:

Telephone number: _____

Name of Cable System:

Situation: Cutting Hours of C-SPAN _____
 Cutting Hours of C-SPAN2 _____
 Dropping C-SPAN _____
 Dropping C-SPAN 2 _____

info taken by: _____
(name)

*PLEASE DROP OFF TO SALES . . . A.S.A.P