

# PROMETHEUS RADIO PROJECT

FLAME FILCHING, WAVE SNATCHING, PEOPLE-POWERED RADIO!  
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## LPFM Encroachment Explained

### What is encroachment?

Encroachment happens when a full power FM station interferes with your LPFM station's transmission either through an increase in their transmission power or by moving their transmitter site closer to yours. The level and effects of the encroachment vary depending on their frequency and the proximity of their transmitter. If you are a LPFM station, encroachment might mean that you could lose some of your signal coverage, be forced to move your transmitter, or even be forced to shut down your station for good.

Since the FCC considers Low Power FM a secondary service and full power FM a primary service, you have to give way to them in the event they want to move their location or frequency closer to yours. It doesn't matter if you were there first, or if they have the worst programming in the world and you offer poignant, local programming. They are the 'Big Boys' and the FCC lets them throw their weight around.

This issue of encroachment did not appear very much in the first six years of LPFM, because the paperwork was a real pain in the neck for full power stations to get clearance to move. But in the fall of 2006, the FCC simplified the process and now full power stations are taking advantage of the opportunity to move around and change their Cities of License in order to gain more listeners (and advertising dollars), and more low power stations than ever are being encroached upon.

### Why should you care?

Catching encroachment situations early can give stations a better chance of surviving to broadcast another day. If a LPFM is aware of an impending encroachment situation in advance, they will have time to access the legal and engineering resources and services they will need to stay on the air.

There are basically two kinds of encroachment. In the milder form, the low power FM merely has to tolerate more interference to their signal because the full power station moved closer. The second, most serious kind of encroachment means that the full power station has moved so close to the low power station that it will be ordered off the air by the FCC. This is because it will become unlistenable and will actually cause interference to the encroaching full power station.

The interference caused by encroachment comes in many forms. Sometimes encroachment will result in a situation that would cause illegal interference as defined by the FCC. In these cases, LPFMs need to take immediate action to modify their transmission to reduce interference. Many encroachment situations result in little actual interference but violate FCC rules about distance between stations. In these cases, the full power station has the option to file a complaint with the FCC.

## **More Information**

REC Networks publishes a periodic Encroachment Report detailing the potential levels of encroachment LPFMs face based on new full power modification applications received by the FCC [cdfs.recnet.net:8080/encroach.php](http://cdfs.recnet.net:8080/encroach.php). REC Networks classifies encroachment situations differently based on severity and potential outcome.

For an explanation of different encroachment situations, visit REC Networks' Encroachment Dictionary at [prometheusradio.org/media/pdf/encroach\\_dict.pdf](http://prometheusradio.org/media/pdf/encroach_dict.pdf). You can visit their websites—[recnet.com](http://recnet.com) and [lpfm.ws](http://lpfm.ws)—for lots of other useful information, tools and resources for LPFM.