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What To Do When the (Tower) Lights Go Out

Over the past two years, the FAA has been consolidating and decommissioning its remaining 58 flight service centers, reducing the total number of such centers to fewer than two dozen. And, as part of that effort, the FAA is centralizing its system for reporting lighting outages on broadcast towers. As a result, in recent months broadcasters may have encountered difficulty in locating their local center to report lighting outages.

FCC rules require antenna owners to *immediately* notify the FAA of extinguished or improperly functioning tower lights. In turn, the FAA passes the information along to pilots to warn them of the hazard.

While many stations may have a page from an old phone book pinned up in the engineer's office or a number taped by the back door, the old phone numbers likely don't work anymore as a result of the FAA's push toward centralization. If the need arises for you to notify the FAA of an outage and you encounter difficulty reaching your local service center, you should call the FAA's nationwide phone number with the following information (feel free to cut this out, make multiple copies, and post them in handy places for reference as necessary):

If you observe a lighting outage on your tower, report it immediately to the FAA. The FAA's nationwide number is:

877-487-6867

When you call, you will need to provide the following information:

Name of the airport nearest to the tower: _____

FCC Antenna Structure Number of the affected tower: _____

The height of the structure (AMSL and AGL): _____

The condition of the light(s) and an explanation of how they ended up that way. You must also report the probable date of restoration. Your report must be updated every 15 days and must be cancelled when the problem is resolved.

(Helpful hint: We recommend that you insert the correct information for the first three items now so that you will have that information at your fingertips should an outage occur.)