

## WHAT IS AN “FCC SUPPORT LETTER” ...and why is it needed?

An “FCC Support Letter” is a document that NSP attaches to certain radio license applications in compliance with FCC Rules.

Ski patrols have traditionally applied for radio channels in the VHF Public-Safety band, in the range 155.160 – 155.295 MHz, a group of channels reserved for EMS, rescue organizations, and medical services, among others. These channels were historically known as “Special Emergency Radio Service” frequencies. When the FCC grouped many Public-Safety frequencies together in what is now called the “Public Safety Pool,” it provided many more channels available to applicants such as NSP.

Normally, a ski patrol requiring just one VHF channel would be assigned one in the existing group of “Special Emergency” frequencies. However, if a patrol needs a VHF repeater (which itself requires two frequencies), or requests a frequency assignment in the UHF Public Safety band (450-460 MHz), the frequency coordinator must look at frequencies historically not assigned to organizations such as NSP. In such a case, the FCC Rules require a letter of support from a governmental entity.

The FCC Rules state that the letter must be issued by a governmental entity (this could be local, county, state, or Federal) **having jurisdiction over the area to be served**. What does that mean? It means that any government agency, from the local (town) government up to and including the Federal Government, can issue a letter of support. The letter can be from a local mayor or town supervisor, police department, fire department, town recreation/parks department, county sheriff, county parks department, 911 coordinator or dispatch center, state police, state parks department, state emergency management/homeland security coordinator, USDA Forest Service, US DOI National Park Service, etc. This is just a partial list. **Any government agency having geographic jurisdiction over the ski area or ski patrol’s area of operation (Nordic patrols) may issue a support letter.**

The letter does not obligate the government agency in any way. It does not cost them any money, it does not increase their legal risk or exposure, it does not mean that they are assuming responsibility for the ski patrol, the ski area, or radio operations. It simply **legitimizes** NSP’s request for one or more frequencies at a given location. Although NSP is well-known at the FCC, the FCC needs to receive confirmation that our channel request at a certain location is known to the governmental agency issuing the support letter.

The specific wording of the support letter is shown in the document titled **“NSP FCC Support Letter,”** which is available on the NSP Telecom Program webpage under “Policies and Procedures.” It is a Microsoft Word document, so it can be easily edited and copied onto the letterhead of the government agency that is to issue the letter.

An original, signed letter is required to accompany the license application form and frequency coordinator fee check.

If you have questions regarding the FCC Support Letter, send an email to [telecom@nsp.org](mailto:telecom@nsp.org).