

WTAT-TV – Request for STA to Operate on Interim Facilities

WTAT Licensee, LLC, licensee of station WTAT-TV, Charleston, SC, FIN 416 (“WTAT”), hereby requests special temporary authority (STA), due to circumstances beyond its control, to operate on interim facilities while its permanent facilities are completed, and further requests a waiver of the Commission’s rules to the extent necessary. WTAT hereby respectfully requests permission to operate from interim facilities for a period of 180 days from September 3, 2019 until March 1, 2020.

WTAT is assigned to transition from Channel 24 to Channel 17 in Phase 5 of the repack.

WTAT’s construction of its facilities has been delayed by a shortage of helicopter and transmitter installation crews. A helicopter pick to install the station’s post-repack permanent antenna was scheduled for August 26, 2019, but the installation was not completed due to unanticipated helicopter crew delays. A transmitter crew is scheduled to be on site on August 29 to install the station’s interim transmitter and interim combiner. The current combiner serves WTAT, WCIV(TV), Charleston, SC (FIN 9015) and WCBD-TV, Charleston, SC (FIN 10587); the new combiner will separate out WTAT and will only be used by WCIV and WCBD. WTAT must cut-over to its new post-repack Channel 17 operations before WCIV can do the same on its post-repack Channel 25. As a result, WTAT is actively working on a channel share agreement to allow WTAT to remain on the air because WTAT will be required to go dark on September 6 on its pre-auction Channel 24. The station is also actively working to re-schedule the helicopter crew to install WTAT’s permanent antenna and a crew to complete installation of the station’s permanent transmitter. Once the station’s permanent antenna is installed, WTAT will cut over and commence operations on its post-repack Channel 17, using its interim transmitter to feed the station’s full power permanent antenna, until such time as the station’s permanent transmitter installation is complete.

Because of this delay, WTAT will not be able to complete construction of either its interim facilities or its permanent post-repack facilities by the end of Phase 5 on September 6, 2019. Thus, WTAT respectfully requests an STA to operate via a channel share agreement to permit WTAT to remain on the air while the station’s operations on Channel 24 will temporarily go dark, and until such time construction is completed on the WTAT’s interim facilities. This request will not impact the repack efforts of other stations because, at the completion of Phase 5, WTAT will go dark on its pre-auction Channel 24, and once the station transitions, it will do so using interim facilities on its post-repack Channel 17. WTAT will continue to work expeditiously to complete construction on both its interim and permanent facilities on Channel 17.