

# *Why your church likely needs to replace its wireless systems—and soon.*

Tyler Charles | posted 5/18/2009

When the government decided to transition from analog to digital television, this freed up the space in the 700 MHz band (698-806 MHz) used by broadcasters (and wireless microphones). In 2008, the Federal Communications Commission auctioned off slices of this spectrum—for billions of dollars—to Verizon, AT&T, and others. When the digital TV transition happens (now slated for June 12, 2009), these companies will start using their respective slices of the spectrum.

What does this mean for churches using 700 MHz wireless devices (including mics, in-ear monitors, and wireless intercom systems)?

"The 700 MHz band has been reallocated and the bottom line is that *any* wireless mic that operates in the 700 MHz band—and that's a lot of them—needs to be replaced," says Chris Lyons, manager of technical and educational communications for Shure Inc., a microphone and audio systems provider.

The FCC hasn't set an official date for when current users must stop using the 700 MHz band, meaning churches aren't required by law to make a change—yet. But that doesn't mean churches won't encounter problems with the way their equipment works in the near future.

"We don't know when the FCC will tell users to get out of the 700 MHz band," says Lyons, "but whether you can or can't [legally populate the 700 MHz band], by the end of 2009, you'll be experiencing interference."

Lyons says it won't happen instantly—acknowledging, for example, that churches in Chicago will notice interference before a church in Wyoming—but it's just a matter of time.

If churches are hoping this problem will be avoided, they're going to be disappointed.

"Sooner or later, Verizon, AT&T, and others who invested billions of dollars in the 700 MHz spectrum are going to want the FCC to clear [unlawful users] out," says Lyons. "There is zero possibility that this will go away completely."

"It's best to assume you'll need to replace equipment by the end of the year."

Please visit the website listed below for more information

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/yc/2009/mayjun/understandingnewwirelessmics.html>