



Hearing Aid Compatibility for Wireline and Wireless Telephones

The Hearing Aid Compatibility Act and other federal laws require the Federal Communications Commission to ensure the availability of wireline and wireless telephones that are compatible with hearing aids and cochlear implants. For simplicity, we refer to hearing aids and cochlear implants, collectively, as “hearing aids.”

When people with hearing aids use a telephone that is not hearing aid compatible, they often hear lots of unwanted noise. Wireline and wireless telephones that are certified as being hearing aid compatible should minimize unwanted noise and be compatible with the magnetic coils (telecoils or T-coils) in many hearing aids. Wireline hearing aid compatible telephones also provide volume control within prescribed amplification limits.

Hearing aids that have telecoils can receive sound signals directly from hearing aid compatible telephones, often eliminating other sounds that could be heard through those hearing aids. Many hearing aid users consider direct telephone-to-telecoil sound to be superior to the sound they hear when they hold a telephone to their ear.

Wireline Telephones

What types of wireline telephones need to be hearing aid compatible?

Telephones that are connected to traditional wireline telephone service must be hearing aid compatible.

All wireline telephones that are intended to be used with a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service and are manufactured or imported for use in the United States on or after February 28, 2020, must be hearing aid compatible. VoIP is an advanced communications service.

What’s the difference between “wireline” and “landline”?

Many people refer to traditional telephone service provided to homes and businesses as “landline” service. The FCC often refers to telephone service provided over copper wires or fiber cables as “wireline” service. Thus, “wireline” is a broad term that includes both traditional telephone service and wireline VoIP service.

What are the requirements for hearing aid compatibility for wireline telephones?

FCC rules require that wireline telephones that are connected to the Public Switched Telephone Network (the telephone network) must:

- Produce a magnetic field of sufficient strength and quality to permit coupling with hearing aids that have telecoils; and
- Provide an adequate range of volume.

Wireline telephones allowing high volume levels must automatically reset to a lower volume each time the telephone is hung up. Telephone manufacturers may request a waiver of this requirement, which would permit certain telephones to remain at the high-volume setting.

These requirements for wireline telephones connected to the telephone network will apply to wireline telephones that are intended to be used with a VoIP service and are manufactured or imported for use in the United States on or after February 28, 2020.

Are there labeling requirements for wireline telephones?

Yes. Wireline telephones that are hearing aid compatible must be labeled as "HAC." If you pick up a wireline telephone that is connected to the telephone network and look at the labels that may be on the bottom of the telephone, you will likely see a "HAC" label.

Wireless Telephones

Are all wireless telephones hearing aid compatible?

No. Unlike wireline telephones, most of which have been hearing aid compatible for decades, not all wireless telephones (also called wireless handsets) need to be hearing aid compatible. In general, manufacturers and service providers must ensure that a certain percentage of the wireless handsets they offer are hearing aid compatible. For example:

- For manufacturers that offer six or more wireless handsets, at least 66 percent of their wireless handset models must comply with the hearing aid compatibility requirements. Beginning October 4, 2021, that number increases to 85 percent.
- For service providers that offer six or more wireless handsets, by April 3, 2019, at least 66 percent of the wireless handset models they offer nationwide must comply with the hearing aid compatibility requirements. Beginning April 4, 2022, that number increases to 85 percent.
- The requirements for manufacturers and service providers that offer five or fewer wireless handsets are more limited.

Where can I find information about available wireless telephones that are hearing aid compatible?

Manufacturers and service providers must post information about their hearing aid compatible wireless handset offerings on their websites.

Wireless manufacturers must annually report to the FCC on the hearing aid compatible handsets that they offer. A list of all the compatible wireless handsets offered by manufacturers during the most recent reporting period is available on the FCC's [website](#).

What are the requirements for hearing aid compatibility for wireless telephones?

Hearing aid compatible wireless handsets are rated according to the magnetic coil capability, and their ability to reduce the noise that the hearing aid otherwise may receive. A wireless handset is considered hearing aid compatible if it meets a "T3" or "T4" rating for use of the magnetic coil, and an "M3" or "M4" rating for noise reduction. These T and M numbers are determined by technical standards that apply to wireless telephones. While the T number tells you how well the magnetic coil in the hearing aid will work with the wireless handset, the M rating is important for when the magnetic coil is not used, and the wireless handset is held up to the ear.

Hearing aids have similar T and M ratings. The higher the T and M ratings for hearing aids, the better they will work with hearing aid compatible wireless telephones.

What are the labeling and testing requirements?

- Packaging: Packages containing hearing aid compatible wireless handsets must be explicitly labeled and must include detailed information about the handset rating system in the package or product manual.
- Try before you buy: If you purchase a wireless telephone at a store that is owned or operated by a wireless service provider, be sure to try your wireless device with your hearing aid in the store before making your purchase. It's best to try several models before buying one, so that you can find the best match between the wireless handset and your hearing aids. Ask to try devices that have been designated as "hearing aid compatible." A wireless telephone's electromagnetic emissions can change depending on your location. Be sure to fully evaluate your listening experience indoors and outdoors, and in many different locations during the return period for the wireless handset.

Filing a Complaint

If you have a problem using a hearing aid with a wireline or wireless telephone that is supposed to be hearing aid compatible, you may first try to resolve the problem with the equipment manufacturer or your service provider. You may search for contact information for a company's accessibility customer care representative on the FCC's [website](#).

Complaints about the hearing aid compatibility of wireline and wireless telephones may be submitted through the FCC's online [Consumer Complaint Center](#). Complaints may also be submitted by phone or mail:

- Phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322)
- TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)
- American Sign Language (ASL) Consumer Support Line: 1-844-432-2275 (videophone)
- Mail:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Please include your name, address, and contact information; the name and address (if known) of the company or companies involved in your complaint; a full description of the telephone(s) you are complaining about, including make and model number, date of purchase or use, or attempt to use; and a brief description of your complaint and the resolution you are seeking.

If you need assistance filing a complaint, please contact the FCC's Disability Rights Office at dro@fcc.gov or by calling 202-418-2517 (voice), 1-888-835-5322 (TTY), or 1-844-432-2275 (videophone).

Learn More

For more information about FCC programs to promote access for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office website at fcc.gov/accessibility.

Alternate Formats

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