



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

Ask the Lawyer

A Useful Tower Maintenance Checklist

By Cary S. Tepper

[May 2015] Good maintenance practices usually entail regular inspections of each part of the studio and transmission plants. Of course, no matter how many things you check, it is all too easy to miss something important. Starting with a general list, and then adding to it as appropriate for your situation will give you a solid maintenance program.

Question: *One of the other stations in our town recently was inspected by the FCC. Among the Notices of Violation (NOVs) received was one dealing with failure to maintain the tower structures properly. What are your suggestions to help us avoid a similar NOV?*

Cary Tepper: Recently one of our clients in the Midwest was cited by the FCC for not properly maintaining its three tower structures.

As part of the investigation process, the FCC wanted to know if our client had a tower inspection checklist that it routinely used. At the time there was no such checklist existing at the station.

In an effort to mitigate the situation, we compiled a modestly comprehensive tower inspection checklist for future use. As you might expect, no individual checklist can apply to all tower situations. However, our checklist is a very good starting point.

We invite you to please review the following Tower Inspection Checklist. We recommend

that you incorporate this checklist into your routine inspection process of your tower structures. You should keep a record of the date & time of every tower inspection in the event the FCC ever questions your diligence with regard to these matters.

Furthermore, help us improve this checklist. If you notice something you regularly check is missing from this list, please do let us know so we can update the list and make it even better.

If you have any questions, please call or email us at tepperlaw@aol.com

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Tower Inspection Checklist

Recently we obtained an “unofficial” Tower Inspection Checklist that warrants serious consideration to keep your tower structures in good working order and FCC-compliant. Please consider the following:

General Site Conditions:

- _____ Is the site accessible and free from excess vegetation growth?
- _____ Are all signs posted as required?
- _____ Are all security fences intact and locks operational?
- _____ Are there signs of soil erosion that may weaken the tower and anchor bases?

Guys and Anchors:

- _____ Are pre-formed wire grips unraveling or can be prevented from unraveling?
- _____ Are safety wires installed on turnbuckles in Figure 8 pattern?
- _____ Do the anchor plates have equal distribution of the load on each side of the anchor rod?
- _____ Is there rust on cotter pins, clips, turnbuckles, anchor rods, or plates?
- _____ Is the guy anchor protected by a well-secured fence?

Tower Structure and Guying:

- _____ Is the guyed tower “plumb?”
- _____ Are there signs of rust or corrosion on any part of the tower?
- _____ Are all bolts and nuts on tower members tight?
- _____ Are all insulators intact?
- _____ Are the weep holes clear to allow condensation and rain water to escape from inside the legs?

Obstruction Lighting System:

- _____ Is the tower light monitoring and alarm operational?
- _____ Are any bulbs needing replacement?
- _____ Are the flash head units free from lightning damage or corrosion?
- _____ Is the tower paint flaking or fading as compared to the FAA color chart?

Lightning and Grounding System:

- _____ Are the grounding rods electrically and mechanically intact?
- _____ Is the wire cable from lightning arrestor to grounding system continuous?
- _____ Are ground rods present and properly connected to guy wires?

Antennas and Transmission Line:

- _____ Are ice shields present and secure?
- _____ Are there signs of dents or bending on any antenna or transmission line?
- _____ Are the grounding kits of cables still intact?
- _____ Are there gas leaks, especially at the tuning adaptor slugs below the antenna?
- _____ Are there signs of overheating or warping on EIA flanges or connectors?
- _____ Are the cable line attachments intact and all bolts and screws tight?
- _____ Are all other antennas such as STL, Yagis, or two-way communications secured and intact?

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