Information Regarding Different FCC Confidentiality Requests

ACB has seen many applicants confused over the FCC's policies regarding the two different confidentiality policies available: "Long-Term" confidentiality and "Short-Term" confidentiality. Information below is provided to help explain the differences in these two policies. Should you have any questions, please contact ACB directly for further clarification. Complete detailed information and further documents regarding the FCC's policies may be found at:
KDB 726920 – FCC Confidentiality Policies
https://apps.fcc.gov/oetcf/kdb/forms/FTSSearchResultPage.cfm?switch=P&id=41731

Long-Term (Permanent) Confidentiality:
"Long-Term" confidentiality is used when an applicant desires to hold proprietary information (such as schematics, technical block diagrams, technical operational descriptions, or other information that can be shown to be proprietary) confidential for an indefinite period of time.

To request Long-Term confidentiality ACB requires a cover letter submitted with the application that requests Long-Term confidentiality, a listing of the exhibits Long-Term confidentiality is being requested for, and a justification for the confidentiality request. This letter must be signed by the FCC Grantee Contact, the applicant's authorized agent, or appropriate authorized representative. A sample confidentiality letter may be found at:
https://acbcert.com/documents/misc-docs/ACB-FORM-FCC-Application-Letters-Confidentiality-Letter.docx.

Short-Term Confidentiality:
"Short-Term" confidentiality is used when an applicant/manufacturer has a need to keep certain information in the application which may be considered sensitive only until the device is launched, marketed, or information is made available to the public regarding the device. The "Short-Term" confidentiality is initially granted for a period that is requested by the applicant. The total maximum time may not exceed 180 days from the date of grant. FCC policies have asked that if known you should specify the days required (i.e. days before marketing or public announcement), and if not known than a 45 day period should be initially requested. The applicant may extend their initial request up to the total allowed 180 days if necessary following policies cited below. **Note that any documents held under the Short-Term confidentiality will automatically become public after the requested time if an appropriate extension request has not been received.** Currently 'Short-Term" confidentiality may only be requested for External Photos, Internal Photos, Test Setup Photos, Block Diagrams, Schematics, User's Manual, Parts List, Tune-Up Procedures, and Operational Descriptions. Any exhibits (i.e. schematics) that may have already been requested to have "Long-Term" confidentiality as shown above need not be repeated under Short-Term confidentiality request.

To request Short-Term confidentiality ACB requires an appropriate cover letter submitted with the application requesting which exhibits Short-Term confidentiality is being requested for and a justification for the reason(s) Short-Term confidentiality is being requested. This letter must be signed by the FCC Grantee Contact, the applicant's authorized agent, or appropriate authorized representative. An example confidentiality letter may be found at:
https://acbcert.com/documents/misc-docs/ACB-FORM-FCC-Application-Letters-Confidentiality-Letter.docx.

Applicant (Grantee) Obligations for Short-Term Confidentiality

Note that if the manufacturer engages in public marketing activities or otherwise publicizes the device prior to the expiration of the Short-Term confidentiality period, the FCC requires that the applicant or their authorized agent must immediately notify ACB so the exhibits can be made publicly available. Failure to do so can be considered breach of the FCC policies.

Short Term Confidentiality Extensions:

A manufacturer may continue to extend the Short-Term confidentiality period if necessary up to a maximum total period of 180 days from the date of grant. Due to recent FCC concerns with manufacturers abusing the extension period policy, unless a precise product launch or public marketing date can be provided during the application review, the FCC desires that the Short-Term Confidentiality periods be no more that 45 days each. Currently the FCC system will email the contact on record for the applicant and the TCB a few days before expiration to allow execution of an extension as necessary. When received ACB will work to contact the applicant as necessary to see if an extension is necessary and execute the extension as appropriate. Responses should be given several days before expiration to ensure that there is appropriate time to execute the extension. Please note that the current Short-Term expiration date can be monitored by reviewing the application exhibits on the FCC web site once the application is granted.

ACB Requirements:

Please note that all requests for confidentiality (cover letters) should be uploaded with the documents provided to ACB for certification review. Requests for Short-Term confidentiality Extensions after the original grant is issued should be handled by contacting one of the following: the original application reviewer or local ACB representatives found at http://acbcert.com/contact.

NOTE: Although ACB does not charge for exhibits held confidential under the FCC's Long-Term confidentiality policy, Short-Term confidentiality requests are subject to an additional charge due to the complexity associated with handling of these requests.

ACB STAFF - Revised 07/14/26