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**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

Resource Guide: Closed-Captioning

Requirement of Closed Captioning on Public Televisions in Maryland

Maryland law requires that, upon request, places of public accommodation are to keep closed captioning activated on any television that is in use during regular hours in any public area. Places of public accommodation are excluded from this requirement if (1) no television receiver of any kind is available in the public area or (2) the only public television receiver available in the public area is not a closed-captioning receiver.¹

Examples of places of public accommodation include, but are not limited to: bars, restaurants, gyms, train stations, bus stations, hotels, and sports venues.

Violations

It is a violation of Maryland law if a business refuses to turn on closed captioning upon request. If any such violation occurs, individuals can file a complaint through the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR). MCCR will investigate the complaint and may take a number of actions to resolve the situation, including mediation or assessing a fine. For more information, please visit MCCR's website <http://mccr.maryland.gov/>.

Benefits of Closed Captioning

Much information is disseminated through audio channels, such as the radio or television. The use of closed captioning on televisions enables many individuals to fully receive information. While many Deaf and hard of hearing individuals benefit from closed-captioning, the closed captioning feature also has increased usability for everyone:

- Better comprehension for viewers who know or are learning English as a second language.
- Improved comprehension of on-screen dialogue that is spoken very quickly or has accents, mumbling, or background noise.
- Enhanced learning environment for children or adults who are learning to read.
- Better clarity of full names, brand names, or technical terminology.
- Improved access to the television in noisy environments, such as restaurants and bars.

¹ Maryland State Government Code §20-306