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HBO Technical Advisory: Audio Loudness

July 28, 2010

Dear Affiliate:

As you know, there has been quite a bit of technical and legislative activity related to audio, specifically the impact of the consumer-perceived audio volume of program networks in a multichannel environment. Led by the ATSC, and closely monitored by the technical and programming sides, the cable, telco and DBS industries have coalesced support around the recently-published ATSC A/85 Recommended Practice: *Techniques for Establishing and Maintaining Audio Loudness for Digital Television*. As was desired, this document has been embraced broadly and has gathered support technically and in the regulatory arenas.

Please be sure to share the below information within your organization to the appropriate technical and programming colleagues.

Summary:

We have chosen to implement the -24 LKFS audio/metadata level and will apply any changes necessary to our originated audio signals. There should be no need for you to adjust any equipment. Some affiliates may have previously applied leveling equipment, or made adjustments to the HBO or Cinemax audio levels. We ask that you discontinue any audio leveling or non unity-gain adjustments as of August 11 at 3:00 AM ET, as those processes may prove to be detrimental, and possibly contrary to the requirements of A/85 going forward. Best practice for distribution is "pass-through or unity gain" of our digital streams to your distribution environment – especially as networks continue to embrace A/85.

Background:

HBO performed extensive measurements of our audio signals and, applying the procedures in the ATSC Recommended Practice, we found that most, but not all, of our content's audio level is consistent with the application of A/85, while still maintaining the high-fidelity premium sound that consumers expect.

Based on the results of our measurements, and to become consistent with the industry norm, HBO has begun applying the guidelines of the *Recommended Practice* to the HBO and Cinemax content on the linear feeds. We plan to complete the normalization of all content on all HBO and Cinemax linear feeds -- SD and HD -- before **August 11, 2010**, when we will implement the -24 dB metadata (on those feeds not already set to that level) at approximately 3:00 AM ET.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to [contact me](#). Also, feel free to contact the HBO Affiliate Hotline at 212-512-5666 or hotline@hbo.com.

Thank you for your continued support of HBO and Cinemax, and also your support in optimizing the consumer's premium audio experience.

Regards,

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