

About North American Radio Broadcasting Agreement

The 'North American Radio Broadcasting Agreement', usually referred to as 'NARBA', is a treaty made in 1941 between the United States, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti relating to the allocation of frequencies for AM radio stations in these countries. In accordance with the treaty, clear channel frequencies were set aside across the radio dial, at a rate of about one per 100 kHz, and the 1230, 1240, 1340, 1400, 1450, and 1490 channels were reserved mainly for local stations. The agreement also officially expanded the upper limit of the AM broadcast spectrum from 1500 kHz to 1600 kHz. It required that most existing AM stations change frequencies, resulting in a massive shuffling of radio station dial positions. The new frequencies took effect at 3:00 a.m. Eastern on March 29, 1941.

NARBA is no longer in effect. It has been superseded by working agreements made in the early 1980s between the U.S. and Canada and between the U.S. and Mexico, and by an ITU-sponsored agreement covering all of the Western Hemisphere.

Among the most significant changes were:

'Old Freq.' (kHz)	'Station(s)'	'Moved' (kHz)	'New Freq.' (kHz)	
540	CBK	unchanged	540	Canadian clear
550-680	all	unchanged	550-680	
690	all, except CFRB	unchanged	690	Canadian clear
	CFRB		860	
700-720	all	unchanged	700-720	
730	all, except CFPL	unchanged	730	
	CFPL	—	1570	
—	new Canadian clear		740	allocated to CBL which moved from 840

740-790	all	up 10	750-790		
—	new Canadian clear		800	allocated to CKLW which moved from 1030	
790-830	all	up 20	810-850		
840	CBL	—	740		
—	new Canadian clear		860	allocated to CFRB	
850-870	all	up 20	870-890		
—	new Canadian clear		900		allocated to CHML (and CJBR)
880-970	all	up 30	910-1000		
980	KDKA	up 40	1020		
990	WBZ	up 40	1030		
1000	WHO	up 40	1040		
1010	KQW (now KCBS)		740		KQW did not move until 1947
1020	KYW	up 40	1060		
1030	CFCN (now CBR)	down 20	1010		
	CKLW		800		

1040	WTIC KRLD KWJJ	up 40	1080	
1050	all	up 20	1070	CBA became a new Canadian clear on 1070
1060	WBAL	up 30	1090	this was later traded for 780 with KFAB
	WJAG	up 40	1110	
1070-1150	all	up 30	1100-1180	
1160	WOWO	up 30	1190	
	WWVA	up 40	1170	
1170	WCAU (now WPHT)	up 40	1210	
1180	KEX	up 10	1190	
	KOB (now KKOZ)		770	
	WDGY (now KFAN)	down 50	1130	
	WINS		1010	
1190	WOAI	up 10	1200	
	WSAZ		930	

	WATR		1320		
1200-1450	all	up 30	1230-1480		
1460	KSTP WSJV (now WTOP)	up 40	1500		
1470	KGA WLAC WMEX (now WWZN)	up 40	1510		
1480	KOMA WKBW (now WWKB)	up 40	1520		
1490	KFBK WCKY	up 40	1530		
1500	all	down 10	1490		
1510	CKCR (later CHYM)	down 20	1490		
1530	W1XBS to WBRY (later WTBY, then WQQW; now dark)	up 60	1590		<p>Since 1934 U.S. frequencies above 1500 had been allocated only to four experimental stations that broadcast with a signal 20 kHz wide for "high fidelity." The stations were converted to regular broadcasting (and regular call signs) with the NARBA frequency move.</p>
	W9XBY to KITE (now dark)	up 20	1550		
1550	W2XR to WQXR (now WQEW)	up 10	1560		
	W6XAI to KPMC (now KNZR)	up 10	1560		