

Nielsen Audio PPM 5-Minute to 3-Minute Listening Qualifier FAQs

When will this go into effect?

The 3-minute qualifier will be officially implemented with the January 2025 PPM survey which measures from January 9th - February 5th and releases starting on February 24th. The first 3-book average (Jan-Feb-Mar 2025) measured with the new qualifier will be released starting on April 22nd with the March 2025 PPM book. The first national survey via Nielsen Nationwide will be the Spring 2025 survey which will be released in September 2025.

What is changing and why?

To be counted in a radio station's Nielsen audience estimate, listening sessions historically must total to at least 5 minutes within the quarter-hour. Nielsen will be modifying the minimum qualifier to credit listening from 5 minutes to 3 minutes in PPM markets. Consumers listen in shorter durations; 45% of PPM all listening occasions are shorter than 5 minutes. An average song is around 3 minutes long. Under current rules, commercials often run at the quarter-hour breaks and advertisers are not getting full credit for audiences to ads.

What moved Nielsen to make this change?

We have consistently heard that the industry is seeking a measurement solution that captures more moments and impressions, particularly when commercials air. Based on close collaboration with media buyers and sellers as well as industry oversight groups, we have identified evolving to a 3-minute qualifier as an ideal solution to enhance Radio measurement and reinforce Radio's value in the media mix.

What were the initial findings from the impact data of moving to a 3-minute qualifier?

Which months were used?

Using May 2024 PPM data across all 48 markets, we compared the difference between using a 5-minute and 3-minute qualifier and the results were very consistent with what we initially shared with clients this summer based on a limited number of markets. Overall, the total lift to AQH (Average Quarter-Hour) is in the low 20s, while specific demos are in the high 20s (%). Generally, larger gains are seen among younger demos, formats and markets. Most of the lift is a result of the same panelist being credited with longer listening durations as opposed to new cume (new unique listeners) being discovered. Time spent grows more than cume in the 3-minute scenario.

Are some stations or formats impacted more than others?

We analyzed the impact data at a format level, but clients were provided market and station-level numbers. All formats saw AQH growth, but younger-skewing formats tended to see larger increases. This makes sense based on how younger consumers use audio - in shorter bursts.

Will you make this shift for TV, too?

This change is being made for audio PPM markets right now.

Is radio going to move to an average minute audience now, similar to national TV?

No. Average Quarter-Hour is going to remain in place for radio - it is the common currency across Diary and PPM markets for both local and national. This change to our crediting rule (in PPM markets) is a back-end process; changing to minute-level ratings would require significant investment in both dollars and time.

Will this change impact diary markets?

No, the 3-minute crediting change is only being implemented in PPM markets. Very few diary entries are under 5-minutes. Audio [Diary Transformation](#) represents Nielsen's continued investment and evolution of the Audio Diary service and is ongoing.

How will this affect buying and selling on a 3-book average?

Be mindful of 3-book averages that overlap the transition from 5-minute to the 3-minute qualifier. This would only impact averages that cross over from the end of 2024 (November, December or Holiday surveys) into Q1 2025 (the new qualifier starts with the

January 2025 survey).

Release Date	NOV 2024	DEC 2024	HOL 2024	JAN 2025	FEB 2025	MAR 2025
1/28/25	No Change					
2/24/25		3-minute qualifier in one book				
3/24/25			3-minute qualifier in two books			
4/22/25				3-minute qualifier in all books		

How will this affect posting?

The change to the 3-minute threshold can result in different delivery if survey methodologies are not aligned. Users should be mindful of these differences when conducting post-buy analyses.

How will network radio be impacted by this change?

Since network radio is a combination of PPM and Diary measurement, the gains will only appear in the largest markets that account for roughly one-third of the US radio audience, while the other two-thirds reported via the Diary methodology will remain unchanged. From an audience perspective, network radio levels in PPM markets will be subject to the same changes that we are seeing now with the impact data. The first national survey to be included will be the Nielsen Nationwide Spring 2025 survey, which releases in September 2025.

For more information, contact Nielsen at:
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