containing copper coated steel and nonmetallic reinforcing members.

The specification contains mechanical, electrical, and environmental requirements, and test methods for evaluation of these aerial service wire designs.

This action establishes RUS requirements for a wider range of aerial service wires without affecting current designs or manufacturing techniques. This wider selection of aerial service wires will afford RUS telephone borrowers the opportunity to increase subscriber services in an economical and efficient manner through enhanced wire designs brought about by technological advancements made during the past eleven years.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1755

Loan programs-communications, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Rural areas, Telephone.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, RUS proposes to amend Chapter XVII of title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 1755—TELECOMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION.

1. The authority citation for part 1755 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, 1921 *et seq.*, Pub. L. 103–354, 108 Stat. 3178 (7 U.S.C. 6941 *et seq.*).

2. Section 1755.98 is amended by adding a new entry to the table in numerical order to read as follows:

§ 1755.98 List of telephone standards and specifications included in other 7 CFR parts.

* * * * *

Section	Issue date	Title
1755.700 through 1755.704	[Effective date of final rule]	RUS Specification for Aerial Service Wires.

* * * * * * *

3. Sections 1755.700 through 1755.704 are added to read as follows:

§ 1755.700 RUS specification for aerial service wires.

§§ 1755.701 through 1755.704 cover the requirements for aerial service wires.

§ 1755.701 Scope.

(a) This section covers the requirements for aerial service wires intended for aerial subscriber drops.

(1) The aerial service wires can be either copper coated steel reinforced or nonmetallic reinforced designs.

(2) For the copper coated steel reinforced design, the reinforcing members are the conductors.

(i) The conductors are solid copper-covered steel wires.

(ii) The wire structure is completed by insulating the conductors with an overall extruded plastic insulating compound.

(3) For the nonmetallic reinforced design, the conductors are solid copper individually insulated with an extruded solid insulating compound.

(i) The insulated conductors are either layed parallel (two conductor design only) or twisted into pairs (a star-quad configuration is permitted for two pair wires).

(ii) The wire structure is completed by the application of nonmetallic reinforcing members and an overall plastic jacket.

(4) All wires sold to RUS borrowers for projects involving RUS loan funds under §§ 1755.700 through 1755.704 must be accepted by RUS Technical Standards Committee ''A'' (Telecommunications). For wires manufactured to the specification of §§ 1755.700 through 1755.704, all design changes to an accepted design must be submitted for acceptance. RUS will be the sole authority on what constitutes a design change.

(5) Materials, manufacturing techniques, or wire designs not specifically addressed by §§ 1755.700 through 1755.704 may be allowed if accepted by RUS. Justification for acceptance of modified materials, manufacturing techniques, or wire designs must be provided to substantiate product utility and long term stability and endurance.

(b) The American National Standard Institute/Insulated Cable Engineers Association, Inc. (ANSI/ICEA) S–89–648–1993 Standard For Telecommunications Aerial Service Wire, Technical Requirements referenced throughout §§ 1755.700 through 1755.704 is incorporated by reference by RUS. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies of ANSI/ICEA S–89–648–1993 are available for inspection during normal business hours at RUS, room 2845, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250–1500 or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC. Copies are available from ICEA, P. O. Box 440, South Yarmouth, MA 02664, telephone number (508) 394–4424.

§ 1755.702 Copper coated steel reinforced (CCSR) aerial service wire.

(a) *Conductors.* (1) Each conductor shall comply with the requirements specified in ANSI/ICEA S–89–648–1993, paragraphs 2.1 through 2.1.5.

(2) Factory joints in conductors shall comply with the requirement specified in ANSI/ICEA S–89–648–1993, paragraph 2.1.6.

(b) *Conductor insulation.* (1) The raw materials used for the conductor insulation shall comply with the requirements specified in ANSI/ICEA S–89–648–1993, paragraph 3.1.1.

(2) The raw materials shall be accepted by RUS prior to their use.

(3) The finished conductor insulation shall be free from holes, splits, blisters, or other imperfections and shall be as smooth as is consistent with best commercial practice.

(4) The finished conductor insulation shall comply with the requirements specified in ANSI/ICEA S–89–648–1993, paragraphs 3.1.5 through 3.1.5.4.

(5) The insulation shall have a minimum spot thickness of not less than 0.9 millimeters (mm) (0.03 inches (in.)) at any point.

(c) *Wire assembly.* (1) The two conductors shall be insulated in parallel to form an integral configuration.

(2) The finished wire assembly shall be either a flat or a notched oval. Other finished wire assemblies may be used provided that they are accepted by RUS prior to their use.

(3) The overall dimensions of the finished wire assembly shall be in accordance with the following requirements: