

Co-Channel Contention

and why we should retire Co-channel interference.



What is co-channel interference?

'Per the CWNA-108 exam guide, co-channel interference is the "Congestion caused by the normal operations of CSMA/CA when multiple BSSs exist on the same channel. Commonly called co-channel congestion (CCC) today."



Source: Carpenter, Tom . CWNA-108: Certified Wireless Network Administrator Study and Reference Guide (p. 525))

The problem with CCI

Technically Muddy

Co-channel interference conflates coordinated medium sharing with distinct non-Wi-Fi RF issues.

Interference implies that the sources are non-Wi-Fi and not the normal contention we expect in DCF (and it's other flavors).

CCI is only functionally problematic in areas where an actively associate client can decode the signal of another AP on the same channel .



The future: Say CCC instead

Co-channel contention

VS

Regular old interference

This is simply Distributed Coordination Function (DCF) in action, which is the foundational protocol that makes Wi-Fi work.

True interference is when devices are on overlapping channels or use other protocols where they can't understand each other, leading to collisions.

Source: Hamina Wireless, and Peter Mackenzie. "Webinar: Why I Love CCI with Peter Mackenzie." YouTube, 14 Jan. 2026, www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEi0OHiaAeA.

? Will you be part of the movement to change from CCI to CCC?