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## New Amateur Radio Licence Class Launched

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### DTI Press release - 15 July 1999

The Radiocommunications Agency announced today that a new class of amateur radio licence will be launched from 2 August 1999. The Agency announced last month that the new Class A/B Licence was being introduced as part of the long term re-structuring of the Amateur Radio Licence. This new category allows access to the High Frequency (HF) amateur radio bands, which are popular for worldwide communication, with a reduced Morse test speed of five words per minute.

It is envisaged that the international requirement for a Morse test will be removed following discussions at the 2002/2003 World Radio Conference. The introduction of the Class A/B Licence is an interim measure in preparation for moving towards a more incentive based licensing system. Discussions on protection of Morse are continuing with the Radio Society of Great Britain, the national representative organisation for radio amateurs in the UK, and further changes to the licence are under consideration.

The new licence class will be available from 2 August 1999 but reservations for call signs in the "M5 + 3 letter" series will be accepted by Subscription Services Ltd from today. Reservations will be dealt with on a strictly "first come first served" basis and a complete application must be received for a reservation to be made. Reservations are normally only accepted where the call sign is expected to be issued within the next six months. For this new licence class, reservations will initially be accepted for M5AAB to M5AZZ.

### Notes for Editors

1 There are two types of Amateur Radio Licence, the full and the Novice. Applicants for a full licence must have passed the Radio Amateurs' Examination while applicants for a Novice licence must have completed a practical training course and have passed the Novice Radio Amateurs' Examination. Novices are allocated segments of the bands allocated to full licence holders and operate at reduced power levels.

2 There are currently two classes of licence, A and B. Class A licence holders have passed a Morse test (12 words per minute for the full licence and 5 words per minute for the Novice licence) and can operate on all allocated bands. Class B licence holders are restricted to bands above 30 MHz.

3 The new A/B Licence is a full licence which will allow access to all amateur bands, with a reduced power level on the HF bands.

4 Amateur and CB Radio Licences are administered on our behalf by Subscription Services Ltd. They can be contacted at the following address: