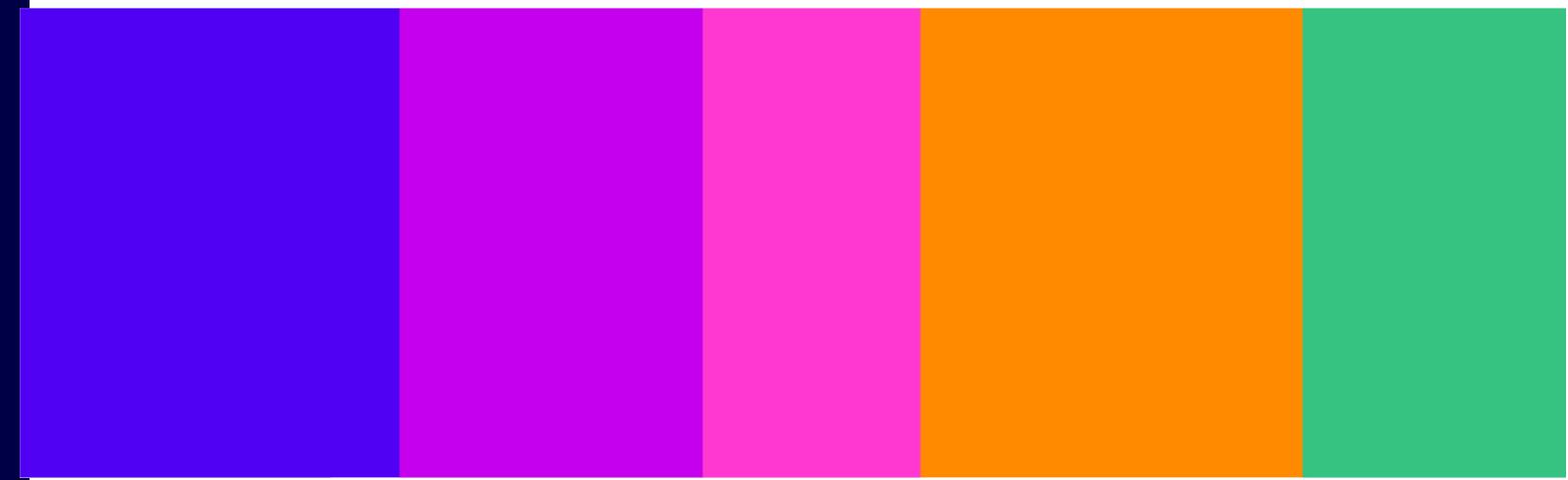


Amateur radio guidance

Licensing guidance document for amateur radio

Amateur Radio Guidance

Published 21 February 2024



Contents

1. Overview	4
1.1 What is amateur radio?	4
1.2 About this document	4
1.3 How do I become a radio amateur?	4
2. How to apply for a licence	5
2.1 Applying for a personal amateur radio licence	5
2.2 Applying for a club licence	6
3. Non-technical licence conditions	8
3.1 High level licence summary	8
3.2 Licence duration and revocation	8
3.3 Licence Fees	9
3.4 Where it can be used	9
3.5 Coordination requirements	9
3.6 Use of the radio equipment	9
3.7 Powers to access, modify and shut down your equipment	11
3.8 Compliance with EMF	11
4. Technical licence conditions	12
4.1 Not to cause undue interference	12
4.2 Transmit power	12
4.3 Airborne use	13
4.4 Remote control and unattended operation	14
4.5 Repeater, beacon, gateway, and data station operation	14
5. Call signs	18
5.1 The purpose of call signs	18
5.2 Acceptable call sign formats	18
5.3 Assigning call signs	18
5.4 Changing and transferring call signs	19
5.5 Holding multiple call signs	19

5.6	Re-issuing old call signs	19
5.7	Using a Regional Secondary Locator (RSL)	19
5.8	Suffixes	20
6.	Notices of variation	21
6.1	What is a notice of variation?	21
6.2	Special Event Station (SES).....	21
6.3	Special Special Event Stations (SSES)	21
6.4	Permanent Special Event Station (SES).....	22
6.5	Special contest call signs (SCC).....	23
6.6	Beacons and Repeaters.....	23
6.7	Additional frequency bands	24
6.8	Special Research Permit (SRP)	24
7.	Advice to UK radio amateurs operating in other countries	25
7.1	Operating overseas as a UK radio amateur	25
7.2	Use on a ship or aircraft outside of the UK.....	26
7.3	Your call sign beyond UK jurisdiction.....	26
8.	Future Changes.....	27
8.1	Overview	27
8.2	Timeline.....	27
8.3	Details of changes	27

1. Overview

1.1 What is amateur radio?

Amateur radio is a hobby that allows people to experiment with and learn about radio, and to communicate with other radio amateurs both in the UK and around the world. By international agreement, amateur radio is exclusively non-commercial and is designed for self-training and technical experimentation.

1.2 About this document

This Guidance document provides information on how Ofcom licences amateur radio, also known as ham radio, in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Crown Dependencies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. It also provides advice on some Ofcom policies associated with amateur radio such as temporary call signs and operating overseas.

From time to time this document may be amended or updated. This guidance is not intended to be relied upon as legal advice, nor does Ofcom give advice to licensees on individual cases. Licensees should seek their own independent advice to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of their licence.

1.3 How do I become a radio amateur?

To operate as a radio amateur in the UK or Crown Dependencies you need to have a Wireless Telegraphy Act licence issued by Ofcom. We issue three levels of Amateur Radio Licences – Foundation, Intermediate and Full. Each level of licence grants certain privileges, for example Full licensees are allowed to transmit at greater powers and are able to use more frequency bands than the lower level licences.

To obtain a licence, an applicant must first pass an exam to demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge to use amateur radio at that level. These exams are administered by the [Radio Society of Great Britain](#) ('RSGB'), the main representative body for radio amateurs in the UK. Examinations can be booked through the [RSGB website](#), and further information on guidance for students can be found [here](#).

Once you have passed your exam the RSGB will supply you with a pass certificate and a candidate number. This number is important as it is needed when you apply to Ofcom for a licence.

2. How to apply for a licence

2.1 Applying for a personal amateur radio licence

Individuals who have passed the relevant examination can then apply to Ofcom for an Amateur Radio Licence. Once you have the licence you are able to operate radio equipment subject to the conditions and limitations set out in the licence.

2.1.1 Online applications

You can apply for an Amateur Radio Licence via our [online licensing portal](#). This is free of charge and the licence document is produced as soon as the application process is complete. For help on how to register, log in and apply for licences via our portal, please see this [guidance document](#). Please note that as part of this process you will need to provide your RSGB candidate number.

You can request a specific call sign suffix via the online system or leave it to the system to select one. The prefix will be that which is currently being issued.

2.1.2 Postal applications

Alternatively, you can submit an application via email, or post to our Spectrum Licensing team. Postal or email applications incur a £20 administration fee for applicants under 75 years old, for those above the age of 75 there is no fee. The application form can be found [here](#).

Once we have received the application, it can take up to 10 working days for us to process the application and issue the invoice for payment. Please note that as part of this process you will need to provide your RSGB candidate number. Once the fee has been paid, for those who are required to pay, the licence document will be automatically issued. This can be either via email or post, depending on your communications preference.

You can request a specific call sign or leave the system to select one. If you request a specific call sign, it can only be assigned if available.

2.1.3 Returning to the hobby

If you had previously held an amateur radio licence but no longer have it you can reapply for a licence at the same level, without the need to take a fresh examination. In order for us to issue a licence we would need some form of proof that an exam had been passed. This could be a copy of an old exam pass certificate or an old licence and a copy of these should be included alongside the paper application form. When applying, you can request to resume use of your old call sign if it is still available.

2.1.4 Operating in the UK with an overseas licence

Some overseas radio amateurs may qualify to operate in the UK and even obtain a UK amateur radio licence.

2.1.4.1 Visiting the UK for less than three months

If you only intend to operate in the UK for less than three months, you may be able to do so using your existing licence. If your licence is from a country that has signed up to [CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01](#) do not need to apply for a UK licence if you are only in the UK for less than three months. If you intend to stay longer than three months or are from an administration that doesn't participate in the Recommendation, you will need to apply for an amateur radio licence issued by Ofcom.

2.1.4.2 Longer term operation in the UK

Some overseas radio amateurs may qualify for a UK licence. The process for applying for a licence will vary depending on the country where the examination was taken.

2.1.4.2.1 CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02

Many countries, including the UK, participate in [CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02](#), which enables radio amateurs from certain countries to be licensed to operate in another. Details of which countries are signatories of T/R 61-02 are set out in the document.

To apply for a UK Amateur Radio (Full) Licence you must have a Harmonised Amateur Radio Examination Certificate (HAREC) issued by a participating T/R 61-02 country. A copy of the HAREC should be included alongside the paper application form. A fee of £20 is payable when the licence is first issued.

2.1.4.2.2 Countries with a reciprocal agreement with the UK

For some other countries outside of T/R 61-02, we also have similar bilateral reciprocal agreements. For those countries where the UK has a bilateral reciprocal agreement, you can apply for an Amateur Radio Full (Temporary Reciprocal) Licence. The countries which this applies to are listed in the application form. Applicants must submit a completed paper application form, accompanied by a copy of their Amateur Radio licence.

The Amateur Radio Full (Temporary Reciprocal) Licence is valid for six months, but it may be renewed for a further six month period. A fee is payable when the licence is first issued and upon each subsequent renewal.

2.2 Applying for a club licence

2.2.1 What is a club licence?

For many years amateur radio licensees have formed clubs so that they can share their common interest in the hobby with others. Members of amateur radio clubs engage in various activities including training and running examinations. Some of these clubs have their own call sign used to identify the club's radio transmissions which they can do so as they hold a Full (Club) Licence.

As these clubs are often not legal entities, we cannot issue a licence to the club directly. Instead, we issue the licence to a named individual who has been authorised by the club to hold the licence. The club is named on the front of the licence document. Whilst the licence is issued to an individual person in this case, it should be clear that it is being held for the activities of the club.

2.2.2 Qualifying criteria

To apply for a Full (Club) Licence, an applicant must hold a Full Licence, and be supported by two other Full Licence holders associated with the club.

There are specific provisions available for Full (Club) Licence applications for educational environments such as schools and universities. These applications only need one Full Licence holder and do not need to be supported by two other Full licensees.

2.2.3 How to apply

You can apply for Club licences online provided the you are registered with our [online licensing service](#).

You can also apply for a Club Licence by submitting a completed [application form OfW346](#) to our Spectrum Licensing team. There will be a one-time administrative fee of £20, payable upon completion of the application.

2.2.4 Making Changes to Club Licences

Any request to make a change to a Full (Club) licence, must be submitted using the Amateur Radio Licence [amendment form Of346a](#). This is because the form includes a formal declaration that the licensee has due authority of the club to request the change. If it were subsequently to emerge that the licensee did not have due authority to request the change, we may reverse the change and the licence would revert to the details that applied before that change.

To change the individual who holds the Full (Club) Licence the existing licence must either be surrendered or revoked. We would then issue a new licence to the person taking over responsibility of the club licence. Any replacement licence will authorise the use of the same call sign to ensure that the club's identity remains consistent. However, until any such revocation has taken place, the terms and conditions of the existing licence will continue to apply. This means that, until or unless the licence has been surrendered or revoked, the club's call sign can only be used with the permission of the named licensee.

If the holder of the licence dies, the licence dies with them. In this case, another club member must apply for a fresh licence and the application must be supported by two other club officials that hold a Full Licence. The application should be accompanied by evidence that the previous licensee has died, together with a note of the club's call sign.

In some cases, the licensed individual ceases to be associated with the club; if this were to happen this is grounds for Ofcom to consider revoking the licence. To do this, we must be satisfied that the licensee no longer represents the club and be provided with evidence that this is the case. For Ofcom to revoke a licence we must follow the process that is set out in the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006¹. Until this process has completed the club's call sign can only be used with the permission of the named licensee.

¹ WT Act 2006, para. 6A of Sch. 1

3. Non-technical licence conditions

3.1 High level licence summary

The licence authorises spectrum use in accordance with the licence terms and conditions. Like most other licences that Ofcom issues, the licence consists of two separate parts:

- The [licence document](#): this includes information specific to a licensee, and covers:
 - > Licence Details and Validity: information such as the licensee’s address details, licence number and the date their licence was issued.
- [Wireless Telegraphy \(WT\) Licence Conditions Booklet](#): this includes the standard terms and conditions applicable to the installation and use of many licences that Ofcom issues. These standard terms and conditions are available on our website in the Amateur Radio Wireless Telegraphy Licence Conditions Booklet (the “Amateur Conditions Booklet”). It covers amongst other things:
 - > The process for varying or revoking a licence;
 - > How any changes to the licence need to be notified to Ofcom;
 - > The requirements for licence fee payment (where relevant);
 - > General provisions regarding the use of radio equipment;
 - > Ofcom’s powers to access and inspect the equipment;
 - > If required, Ofcom’s powers to require licensees to modify, restrict or stop using the radio equipment; and
 - > Requirements on licensees to ensure that members of the general public are protected from Electromagnetic Fields (EMF).
- **Notice of Coordination**: this provides information on all the mandatory coordination requirements placed on licences to protect other services from interference. It includes exclusion zones for some forms of operation.

These three documents together form the licence. Licensees are required to comply with all the terms and conditions in both the licence document, the separate Amateur Conditions Booklet and Notice of Coordination. Licensees are issued with their own licence document and can access the [Amateur Conditions Booklet and Notice of Coordination online](#).

3.2 Licence duration and revocation

The licence is a lifetime licence as long as you revalidate it every five years and do not breach any of the licence terms and conditions. Licences are valid indefinitely, unless surrendered by the licensee or revoked by Ofcom.

The licence permits Ofcom to revoke the licence for spectrum management reasons, so long as five years’ notice has been given. We normally only do this if we intend to change the way a band is used. However, in the case of 2310-2350 MHz, 2390-2400 MHz and 3400-3410 MHz, only three months’ notice is required.

We may also revoke the licence at any time for other reasons set out in the licence, including if the conditions of the licence are breached or a licensed user is causing interference to other authorised spectrum users.

3.2.1 Revalidation

It is important for Ofcom to have accurate licensee details as without it we are unable to contact licensees. This can undermine our ability to regulate the operation of amateur radio equipment effectively. It is the responsibility of the licensee to confirm to us that Licence details remain valid. If a licensee fails to maintain their details, we may propose to revoke the licence.

To validate your licence, you must log in to the Online Licensing System. An on-screen prompt will appear asking you to check and update or confirm your details, to do this use the 'Verify my details' button. If you are unable to access the Online Licensing System, you can contact Spectrum Licensing to revalidate your licence.

3.3 Licence Fees

A licence fee of £20 is charged for all paper applications unless the applicant is over 75 years of age. If carried out online no fee is charged.

3.4 Where it can be used

The licence authorises use of the designated spectrum across and over the UK and the Crown Dependencies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, including their territorial seas. This covers the area out to twelve nautical miles or until a point is reached halfway to another country, such as France. The licence also applies to other areas covered by UK law such as UK controlled areas of the North Sea.

The licence continues to apply if used on a UK registered ship or aircraft in international waters or airspace. The licence does not cover the use on a non-UK registered ship or aircraft internationally nor any use within the territorial waters or airspace of another country. Further information on requirements for operating outside of the UK can be found in Section 7.

The licence requires you to obtain the permission of the captain (or the person in charge at that time) of the ship or aircraft before transmitting and comply with any instructions they give, including stopping transmitting.

Airborne operation must be restricted to 500 mW ERP in primary amateur radio bands only, as detailed in Schedule 1 of the Amateur Conditions Booklet.

3.5 Coordination requirements

The use of certain frequencies or modes of operation may be restricted or must be coordinated with other users before any transmissions can start. As part of the licence conditions licensees must operate in accordance with these restrictions.

Information on these is set out in the [Notice of Coordination](#).

3.6 Use of the radio equipment

3.6.1 Purpose

Amateur Radio is a radio service that is recognised internationally under the [International Telecommunications Union \(ITU\) Radio Regulations](#). It is up to the licensee to ensure that the radio equipment is only used in accordance with Condition 6(4-5) of the Licence terms and conditions.

Amateur Radio is an activity pursued by individuals for personal (or 'hobby') purposes with no commercial, financial or profit aspect to it. The UK Amateur Radio Licence does not authorise the use of Amateur Radio for business purposes.

3.6.2 Who can use the equipment

Normally, a station may be operated only by the licensee or by someone else who holds a UK Amateur Radio Licence. However, the Licence allows others to use the station in some circumstances. It should be noted that at all times the licensee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the terms and conditions of the licence.

3.6.2.1 Supervised use

The Licence allows anyone to use the radio equipment providing that they are under the direct physical supervision of the licensee. This is required so that at any time the licensee can take back control of the radio equipment.

Under a Full (Club) Licence, the licensee may allow any Full-level Licence holder to use the radio or to directly supervise anybody else using the radio.

3.6.2.2 Emergency services and responders

The Licence includes specific provisions to allow licensees to provide emergency communications to support the response to an incident or training for one.

3.6.3 Making transmissions

When transmitting and sending messages there are a number of things that a licensee must comply with.

3.6.3.3 Encryption

Messages sent between amateur stations shall not be encrypted unless this is a control signal between an earth command station and an amateur satellite. This provision does not apply if supporting a User Service that requires encryption.

3.6.3.4 General reception messages

The purpose of Amateur Radio is to communicate with other radio amateurs (individually or in networks). The Licence states that the licensee must not send messages for general reception, except for initial ("CQ") calls or transmissions to groups of three or more Amateurs, so long as communication is first established separately.

The only exception to this is covered by Condition 6(20)(c), enabling messages transmitted by a Beacon or Data Station which typically transmit data automatically. This provision also covers existing bulletin board and mailbox forms of operation.

3.6.3.5 Identification

A station's unique identity is the call sign that we assign, and this is the identity that must be transmitted. The call sign can also include a Regional Secondary Locator (RSL)² or suffix, on an optional basis. For more information see section 5 on call signs.

² For Intermediate stations utilising a '2' format call sign, use of an RSL remains a requirement.

3.6.3.6 Sending of grossly offensive, obscene, or menacing messages

It is an offence under the [Wireless Telegraphy \(Content of Transmission\) Regulations 1988](#) to send a message, communication or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an obscene or menacing character.

Sadly, there are a small number of cases which occur each year that involve threatening violence, harassment, malicious communication or can be classified as a hate crime. If you receive any threats of immediate danger or violence, these should be referred directly to the local police. Ofcom will seek to support a police investigation and take steps when appropriate to revoke the licence of those involved with committing such an offence.

3.7 Powers to access, modify and shut down your equipment

The licence includes terms that allow Ofcom to instruct the licensee to provide access to, modify or shut down the radio equipment – but we will only do this if there is a problem that we consider requires such action. For example, we may do this if your equipment was causing interference to another user. In these cases, we may request that you modify your equipment parameters and change the way it transmits so that it no longer causes interference.

3.8 Compliance with EMF

All uses of radio spectrum generate electromagnetic fields (EMF). There are internationally agreed guidelines published by the [International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection](#) (ICNIRP) to help ensure services operate in a way that will not adversely affect health. These guidelines include limits on EMF exposure for the protection of the general public. We refer to these limits as the “ICNIRP general public limits”.

In our Statement on “Measures to require compliance with international guidelines for limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF)” (the “EMF Statement”), we explained that some spectrum users are not fully aware of the limits in the ICNIRP Guidelines or are not taking full account of EMF exposure when installing or modifying radio equipment. In order to address these risks, we decided to include a specific condition in licences requiring licensees to comply with the ICNIRP general public limits. This condition applies to all licence classes which authorise equipment to transmit at powers higher than 10 Watts EIRP or 6.1 Watts ERP (including, for example, the licences of mobile phone companies, TV and radio broadcasters and most point-to-point microwave links).

Therefore, a requirement of the licence is that the licensee carry out an assessment³ to check that its radio equipment operates within the ICNIRP general public limits.

We have published [guidance on how to comply with the EMF condition](#) on our website. This includes some [user-friendly guidance specifically designed for radio amateurs](#). More general information on Ofcom’s work in relation to EMF condition can be found on [the EMF section of our website](#).

³ There are some circumstances where licensees do not need to carry out an assessment. These are set out in paragraph 6.12 of our [Guidance on EMF Compliance and Enforcement](#).

4. Technical licence conditions

The amateur radio licence includes a number of technical conditions that licensees must adhere to. A summary of these is provided in this section.

4.1 Not to cause undue interference

The Licence requires that any radio equipment is designed, constructed, maintained, and used so that its use does not cause any undue interference to any other wireless telegraphy user. Licensees therefore need to ensure that all measures are taken for this not to occur, this should include testing the radio equipment from time to time.

4.1.1 Unwanted emissions

Unwanted emissions consist of spurious emissions and out-of-band emissions. To prevent interference, the radio equipment should be as stable and as free from unwanted emissions, as the technical development for the radio equipment permits. For example, close attention should be given to the transmitted bandwidth and to avoid spectral regrowth affecting adjacent users, as well as harmonics that may arise further away in other frequency allocations.

For reference, Table 16 in Annex 6 of the CEPT [ERC Recommendation 74-01](#) sets out the spurious limits for Amateur Radio equipment. Annex 9 of [ITU-R Recommendation SM.1541-6](#) provides information on out of band limits for amateur services. If building your own equipment, you need to consider the limits set out in these documents in order to avoid causing undue interference.

4.1.2 Equipment compliance

For equipment that is self-built, there is no general requirement for Amateur Radio apparatus to conform to the essential requirements of the [Radio Equipment Regulations 2017](#) (RER). However, the RER does cover commercially available Amateur Radio apparatus ('plug-and-play' equipment or kits). More information on the RER can be found [here](#).

4.2 Transmit power

The class of amateur radio licence determines the maximum permissible power level a licensee is able to use. Table 3 provides a high level summary of the permitted power levels at each level.

The powers set out below are the maximum limits the licence permits you to transmit at. However, you should always look to use only the power you need for your operations at the time.

Table 3: Permitted Power Levels⁴

Licence level	Power	Comments
Foundation	25 Watts / 13.98 dBW PEP	Available in most bands
Intermediate	100 Watts / 20 dBW PEP	Available in most bands
Full	1000 Watts / 30 dBW PEP	Bands allocated as Primary in Schedule 1 of the licence.
	400 Watts / 26 dBW PEP	Available in most other bands.

Please note that some frequency bands are subject to further power restrictions. For full details of the power restrictions please consult Schedule 1 in your licence.

As set out in Section 3, the use of transmit powers above 10 Watts EIRP or 6.1 Watts ERP is only permitted if the licensee can demonstrate (prior to transmitting) that their use of radio equipment complies with the EMF licence condition.

4.2.1 Measurement of power

The Amateur Conditions Booklet sets out the transmit power requirements for radio equipment for the three levels of licence. These limits include a reference stating how the power is calculated.

4.2.1.1 Peak Envelope Power (PEP)

PEP is the average power supplied to the antenna by a transmitter during one radio frequency cycle at the crest of the modulation envelope taken under normal operating conditions.

4.2.1.2 Effective radiated power (ERP)

ERP is the product of the power supplied to an antenna and its gain in a given direction relative to a half-wave dipole.

4.2.1.3 Equivalent isotropic radiated power (EIRP)

EIRP is the total power radiated by an antenna, taking into account the power delivered to the antenna and the antenna gain in a given direction relative to an isotropic antenna.

4.3 Airborne use

Any airborne amateur use must comply with all the conditions set out in the Licence, including the non-commercial nature of the amateur service. Airborne use is only permitted where amateur radio is the Primary user of the frequency band and is subject to a maximum transmit power of 500mW EIRP. [Schedule 1 of the Amateur Conditions Booklet](#) details the bands where airborne operation is allowed.

Use of amateur radio equipment on things such as balloons, kites or paragliders is allowed within UK airspace. Airborne use in international airspace is only permitted if on board a UK registered aircraft.

⁴ Detailed information can be found in Schedule 1 of the Licence terms and conditions booklet.

4.3.1 Aircraft

Airborne operation on an aircraft must only be done with the permission of the captain or the person in charge of the aircraft and must cease upon request. The amateur radio licence only authorises the use of radio equipment in regard to the authorisation under the [Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006](#). It does not provide any broader authorisation related to airborne operations, airworthiness or supersede any aviation safety rules or requirements. Therefore, it should be noted that the use of amateur radio should in no way be used instead of the appropriate aeronautical communications requirements set by the [Civil Aviation Authority](#) (CAA).

The licence permits the use of Amateur Radio in international airspace only on a UK registered aircraft. It does not permit the use in another country's airspace. Use on a non-UK registered aircraft outside UK airspace falls outside of Ofcom's jurisdiction and requires authorisation from the administration of the country where the aircraft is registered. Further information about requirements for international operation can be found in section 7.

4.3.2 Drones

Ofcom receives enquiries from those wishing to control a drone under the Amateur Radio Licence. These operations include telecommand (used to control the drone) or data transmission (e.g. video showing a pilot's eye view of the flight termed 'First Person View' (FPV)). This is desired as the transmit powers permitted by the Amateur Radio Licence are more than those set out in exemption regulations for Wi-Fi type devices.

This is not the purpose of Amateur Radio and this type of use is not compatible with the terms of the Licence. It should also be noted that the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands used by most drones are in Secondary allocations where no airborne use is permitted. Ofcom has a UAS Radio Operator licence that may be more appropriate for longer range requirements. More information on this licence can be found [here](#).

4.4 Remote control and unattended operation

Remote control operation is where the radio equipment is not located at the same place as the licensee but remains under their direct control. This can be either via a radio link, or alternative method such as an internet connection.

Unattended operation is where the radio equipment is located outside of the licensee's main station address and used by a person not at the same location. This is especially the case for systems such as repeaters that may be used by other amateurs.

4.4.1 Identification of the radio equipment

Where the radio equipment is located away from the main station address and at a different location to the licensee, the licence states that the licence number must be clearly displayed on, or next to, the radio equipment. This is the minimum information we request as it is essential that we can identify the owner of the equipment when investigating reports of interference or compliance with the electromagnetic fields (EMF) provisions in the licence.

4.5 Repeater, beacon, gateway, and data station operation

Operation of most repeaters, beacons, gateways, and data stations now falls under the licence terms and conditions and no longer requires an NoV to the licence. An NoV will still be required in some circumstances so please check the information below.

Where a beacon, repeater, gateway, or data station operates either remotely or unattended the licensee must comply with the unattended or remote operation licence conditions in addition to the licence provisions for the type of station.

4.5.1 Arrangements for existing NoV holders

For those who hold an existing NoV for a repeater, beacon, gateway, or data station, please note:

- If the repeater or beacon NoV is for powers above 25 Watts ERP, it remains valid and is required.
- If the NoV is for powers below 25 Watts ERP, the NoV whilst no longer formally valid, can be used as evidence that steps have been taken to avoid interference under the revised licence conditions. However, the power or other parameters change, you will have to show that the increase in power does not cause interference and comply with the steps outlined below.

4.5.2 Demonstrating reasonable steps have been taken to minimise risk of undue interference

When operating a beacon, repeater, gateway, or data station a condition of the Licence is that the licensee must be able to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to minimise the risk of causing undue interference to other authorised uses of radio. If requested, the licensee must be able to provide written evidence of this to Ofcom. It is up to the licensee to decide on how they comply with this provision however, a failure to do this would be a breach of the licence possibly leading to enforcement action by Ofcom.

The relevant licence conditions include Condition-5 regarding Coordination (and the Notice of Coordination attached to the licence terms).

Licensees can carry out their own interference assessments or use existing procedures such as the RSGB coordination process. For those licensees previously operating under an NoV, but is no longer required following the changes, providing that transmissions remain within those parameters set out in the NoV, this can be used as evidence of compliance. In some cases, operating within agreed amateur radio practices can be another way of demonstrating compliance, especially for low power operation.

The use of certain types of these modes of operation are coordinated by the amateur community in order for these not to cause problems to other users. To support this, the RSGB has developed a [band plan](#) (coordinated internationally) which provides guidance to amateurs on how they transmit using different operating modes without causing incompatibility issues.

There remain specific protection requirements and coordination procedures necessary to ensure protection of other radio users from Amateur Radio transmissions in certain bands. We have introduced a [Notice of Coordination](#) that sets these out. In addition to the general conditions regarding assessing interference, in the 1240 – 1325 MHz band there will continue to be the requirement for unattended amateur apparatus of any power to be coordinated with the CAA and MoD before transmissions can begin. A number of other bands and some specific locations are also included in the Notice of Coordination.

4.5.2.1 Frequency clearance request process

Where applicable, the frequency clearance for repeaters, beacons, gateways, and data stations requires that a licensee must first obtain a provisional call sign from the RSGB. The RSGB or an applicant must then send the clearance request to Ofcom. This also needs to include any documentation provided by the RSGB and evidence that demonstrates that reasonable steps have

been taken to minimise the risk of interference. After receiving this information, we will engage with the CAA and MoD who will approve or deny the clearance request. We will then issue the clearance authorisation should it be approved.

Frequency clearance approval is also required for repeaters, beacons, gateways, and data stations operating above 25 Watts ERP in bands such as 430 – 440 MHz and 1240 – 1325 MHz band. Equipment operating above 25 Watts ERP requires an NoV meaning that the clearance approval will remain part of the NoV application process.

4.5.3 Misuse of the station

Repeaters, gateways and data stations allow the retransmission of messages and data generated by other radio amateurs both in the UK and across the world. The licensee remains responsible for transmissions made via their radio equipment. Therefore, all reasonable steps need to be taken to minimise the risk of unsuitable content being transmitted. If the station keeper becomes aware of misuse or is aware of persistent cases, they need to take action to address the issue. This may include documenting or audio recording the incident, switching it off the station for a period of time or restricting access to the station to certain licensees. Failure by the station keeper to tackle these problems may result in Ofcom requiring the permanent shutdown of the station or in the worst circumstances the revocation of their licence.

4.5.4 Repeater operation

An amateur radio repeater is a device that receives an amateur radio signal and retransmits it, so that the signal can cover longer distances without degradation. Throughout the UK there is a network of such devices.

- **Low power repeaters under 5 Watts:** Holders of an Intermediate or any Full-level Licence may operate a repeater that transmit at less than 5 Watts ERP.
- **Higher power repeaters between 5 and 25 Watts:** Holders of an Intermediate or any Full, Full (Club) or Full (Temporary Reciprocal) Licence can deploy repeaters that transmit above 5 Watts ERP but no greater than 25 Watts ERP without an NoV. Licensees will need to obtain a specific call sign from the RSGB, or other body stipulated by Ofcom, before transmission begins.
- **NoV for repeaters above 25 Watts:** In exceptional cases, repeaters that operate above 25 Watts ERP may be permitted, but will still require an NoV and clearance. Further information on these can be found in Section 7 below.

All repeaters must operate on frequencies above 28 MHz, as set out in Condition 6(14).

The deployment and operation of repeaters in certain frequency bands are subject to restrictions which are set out in Table 2 of the [Notice of Coordination document](#).

4.5.5 Gateway operation

A gateway is a radio device through which amateur radio equipment can connect to a non-Amateur network, such as the internet.

- **Low power Gateways under 5 Watts:** Holders of any Amateur Radio Licence (Foundation, Intermediate or Full) can operate a Gateway radio device under 5 Watts ERP without the need for an NoV.
- **Connectivity equivalent to a Gateway:** This can also be implemented by Repeaters and Data Stations, whereby they incorporate non-RF connections to non-amateur networks (a facility included in their former NoV).

Where a separate Gateway station provides an RF link to/from a repeater, the general rules for the use of a repeater would continue to apply. However, before such a link can connect to a repeater, individuals must obtain the repeater keeper's permission.

The deployment and operation of gateways in certain frequency bands are subject to restrictions which are set out in Table 2 of the [Notice of Coordination document](#).

4.5.6 Beacon operation

An amateur radio beacon is a transmit-only device that automatically emits a signal on a specific frequency. They can be used to monitor propagation conditions and how radio waves travel through the atmosphere as well as for position reporting, direction finding or telemetry. Examples of the latter include transmit-only APRS.

- **Low power beacons under 5 Watts:** all radio amateurs (Foundation, Intermediate and Full) that hold a Licence can deploy beacons up to 5 Watts ERP.
- **Higher power beacons between 5 and 25 Watts:** Intermediate and Full licensees can deploy beacons up to 25 Watts ERP, subject to the licensee obtaining a necessary call sign from the RSGB or other bodies stipulated by Ofcom.
- **NoV for beacons above 25 Watts:** Intermediate and Full-level licensees can still deploy beacons over 25 Watts ERP. The deployment of these beacons will require a NoV, more information on the process can be found below in Section 7.

The deployment and operation of some types of radio beacons are subject to restrictions which are set out in Table 2 of the [Notice of Coordination document](#).

4.5.7 Data Station operation

A Data station transmits or receives data. These are usually machine-to-machine operations that carry third-party amateur radio traffic. Examples of a data station include APRS, UIView/Packet stations, data/trunk links and RF mesh networks.

- **Low power data stations under 5 Watts:** any Amateur Radio Licence holder can operate data stations up to 5 Watts ERP.
- **Higher power data stations between 5 and 25 Watts:** Intermediate and Full-level licensees can operate data stations, up to 25 Watts ERP, subject to the licensee obtaining a necessary call sign from the RSGB or other bodies stipulated by Ofcom.

The deployment and operation of data stations in certain frequency bands are subject to restrictions which are set out in Table 2 of the [Notice of Coordination document](#).

5. Call signs

5.1 The purpose of call signs

Call signs are the primary method amateurs use to identify themselves when communicating with other operators. Each amateur radio licensee has a unique call sign, by which they can be identified. This is important for spectrum management as it enables receiving stations to know who is calling them and so ensures compliance with relevant international agreements and identification of the source of any problematic signals.

5.2 Acceptable call sign formats

The call signs that Ofcom issues for normal operation under the Amateur Radio Licence are made up of an initial character 'G' or 'M' (denoting that a station is authorised by the UK), followed by a number and then, normally, three letters. Very old call signs, some of which remain in use, have only two trailing letters. A call sign with only two trailing letters or which starts with 'G2' is only available if the applicant previously held it.

The call signs that Ofcom issues for normal operation under the Amateur Radio Licence for Full (Club) Licences are made up of an initial character 'G', followed by three letters. Some club call signs have only two trailing letters if the club can prove the call sign heritage and connection to the Club.

The call sign that we issue shows the level of the station, as set out in the table below.

Table 1: Amateur Radio Call sign formats

Call sign initial characters	Station level
Currently issuing: M7 Formerly issued: M3, M6	Foundation
Currently issuing: 2#0 Formerly issued: 2#1	Intermediate
Currently issuing: M0 Formerly issued: M1, M5, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G0	Full

5.3 Assigning call signs

When applying online, you are able to choose the call sign suffix (trailing three letters) that you wish to use. The prefix (e.g., for Foundation, 'M7') is already designated. There is also the option to choose the next available call sign if you have no preferences.

If you wish to obtain a specific call sign outside of the blocks currently being issued (e.g., Foundation, 'M7'), you may manually send in a request to Ofcom with your preferences, and we will look to see how we can accommodate your request.

Lists of available call signs are not routinely published by Ofcom, but when requesting a call sign, it is important to consider if it is permitted with your licence level and acceptable call-sign formats. Currently, we do not allow individuals to change their call sign if allocated one they don't like online.

5.4 Changing and transferring call signs

We assign each station a unique identifier – its call sign. This enables us to meet our obligations under the Radio Regulations, which require stations to be clearly identifiable and prohibits misleading identities. Being unique, these call signs may not be changed or transferred. However, on occasion, we do allow such a change in exceptional circumstances which are judged on a case-by-case basis⁵.

5.4.1 Transferring club call signs

As mentioned previously, a Full (Club) Licence and its associated call sign are issued to an individual acting on behalf of the club. As we do not permit the transfer of amateur radio call signs, to transfer the call sign to a new individual acting on behalf of the club requires the revocation of the existing Full (Club) Licence and applying for a new one.

5.5 Holding multiple call signs

We will be restricting the number of personal licences, and therefore call signs, an individual can hold. This means that you will only be able to hold a single personal licence and call sign. If you currently hold multiple call signs, you will have the option to elect which call sign you wish to keep. For those interested in multiple Club call signs, please see our guidance below in Section 8.

These changes will not come into effect immediately, more detail on the future changes to our Amateur Radio Licensing framework is available in Section 8.

5.6 Re-issuing old call signs

Once a call sign is relinquished, there must be a period of 'rest' before it can be re-assigned to identify a new station to ensure the unique identity of a station is maintained. Therefore, we will not make a call sign available for five years following the expiry of its previous use. Once the five year period has elapsed, we can reissue a call sign if it is available and is expressly requested by someone applying for a new licence.

5.7 Using a Regional Secondary Locator (RSL)

An RSL enhances the 'core' call sign of an Amateur Radio Licence. They are used to indicate the UK nation (or Crown Dependency) in which a station is operating. The use of RSL's, in most cases, is now optional for licensees.

The licence does not require the use of an RSL except in the case of Intermediate stations that utilise a '2' format call sign. This is because, without an RSL, the format of these call signs (e.g., '20aaa') does not confirm to the requirements set out in the Radio Regulations. Inserting the RSL ensures that the call sign does confirm to the Radio Regulations.

RSL's are not mandated by the Radio Regulations and are used by few other countries and serve no spectrum management purposes, hence they are no longer a mandatory requirement. However, we

⁵ In the future, there will be the facility to change call signs periodically, please see section 8 for more information.

understand that RSLs are important to some radio amateurs and therefore, they can continue to be used in call signs, on an optional basis.

Table 2: UK Regional Secondary Locators (RSL)

Region	All Licences	Full (Club) Licence only
England	E	X
Guernsey	U	P
Isle of Man	D	T
Jersey	J	H
Northern Ireland	I	N
Scotland	M	S
Wales	W	C

5.7.1 Temporary RSLs

We sometimes issue temporary RSLs to mark special occasions such as a royal coronation and other significant national events. The amateur radio licence allows licensees to use any special RSL as notified by Ofcom. An example of a special RSL was the use of 'Q' to mark the period of national mourning in 2022.

Such temporary RSLs are only available on a temporary basis, which means:

- The RSL is available for no more than one year;
- Where possible, the period of availability will be bounded by two dates of significance to the event being marked;
- The start and end dates do not need to be in the same calendar year.

The ability to use a temporary RSL will be notified via the Ofcom website.

5.8 Suffixes

A 'suffix' is a group of one or more letters added to the end of a call sign following the 'slash' (/) character. These have typically been used to indicate that the station is not at its main station address. Examples of suffixes that can be used to indicate an alternative location are '/A', '/M', '/MM', '/P', '/AM'.

Any suffix, following the 'slash' (/) symbol may be added to the transmitted call sign, so long as the station remains identifiable. Suffixes are not mandated by, or referenced in, the amateur radio licence as they do not form part of the 'core' call sign and are not required for the management of the radio spectrum.

When used, the suffix becomes part of the call sign and is therefore subject to the [Wireless Telegraphy \(Content of Transmission\) Regulations, 1988](#) which must be complied with at all times; any breach of these regulations could be considered a police matter and will be referred to the correct authorities as appropriate.

6. Notices of variation

6.1 What is a notice of variation?

An amateur radio licence can, in some circumstances, be varied to allow the licensee to do things that the normal licence will not allow.

The rules and criteria set out for Special Event Stations and Special, Special Event Stations will be changing in the future, for more information on these changes see Section 8. The guidance below will be updated once the new rules are in force.

6.2 Special Event Station (SES)

The holder of a Full Licence (personal or Club) may apply for permission to use an additional call sign to denote an official event. We authorise SES call signs by varying the individual Amateur Radio Licence. An SES must mark a recognised event, such as a sporting or local event.

The effect of the variation is to authorise the licensee to identify the station using the SES call sign, because the (unvaried) licence does not normally allow that. However, using an SES call sign remains optional and the licensee may still identify the station with the normal station call sign.

Eligibility

To apply for an SES call sign, the applicant must be a Full, or Full (Club) Licence holder. Holders of Temporary Reciprocal Licences are excluded.

We authorise any location(s) that is/are clearly defined.

Other radio amateurs are able to operate the station, as long as it is in accordance with the licence terms and conditions.

Duration

We normally authorise an SES for no more than 28 days and allow only one SES per event. It is therefore first come, first served. In a limited set of circumstances, we may authorise an SES for longer than 28 days.

An SES call sign can be applied for up to 6 months prior to the event.

Call sign format

SES call sign formats must comply with Article 19 of the Radio Regulations. They must not be offensive and must not have been used for another event in the past two years. Applicants may request a specific call sign or alternatively we can assign one.

We always assign an SES call sign in the format 'GB' followed by a digit (except '3', '7' or '9') followed by up to two or three letters. It is our practice to rest a call sign for two years following the event to ensure that any subsequent use does not cause confusion.

6.3 Special Special Event Stations (SSES)

An SSES is designed as a showcase for the hobby and must be associated with an event of national or international significance. There are certain criteria, detailed below, that must be met for an SSES to be assigned.

To apply for a Special Special Event Station, you will need to complete an [application form](#) and send it to Spectrum Licensing via post or email.

Eligibility

Only Full, or Full (Club) licensees are eligible to hold an SSES call sign. Holders of Temporary Reciprocal Licences are excluded.

In order to obtain an SSES call sign, the following criteria must be met:

- The amateur radio SSES is an adjunct to commemorations or celebrations of a non-amateur radio event;
- The non-amateur radio event is of national or international significance (e.g., Coronation events, the Olympics); and
- Those organising the official arrangements for the non-amateur radio commemorations agree to the amateur radio SSES being associated with their event. This requires the licensee to have confirmation from this third party and include it as part of the application.

Duration

An SSES must not exceed one year in duration, and a call sign is rested for two years, except in cases of recurring annual events.

An applicant can't apply more than 6 months in advance of an event, for a call sign.

Call sign format

SSES call sign formats must comply with Article 19 of the Radio Regulations, they must not be offensive and must not have been used for another event in the past two years. Applicants may request a specific call sign or alternatively we can assign one.

The call sign should not normally exceed eight characters in total, though we may consider requests for longer call signs. The format of SSES call signs that we assign is 'GB' followed by 2 or 3 digits (0-9) and 2 or 3 letters (e.g., 'GBxcca')⁶.

6.4 Permanent Special Event Station (SES)

A PSES is designed as a showcase for the hobby. These stations are usually established in a museum or other curated display of national or international significance. Examples include the Imperial War Museum and the Abbey Mills sewage pumping station in South London.

To apply for a Permanent Special Event Station, you must complete an [application form](#) and submit it to Spectrum Licensing via post or email.

Eligibility

PSES NoVs are available to Full Licence holders only, including Club Licences. Holders of Temporary Reciprocal Licences are excluded due to their temporary nature.

PSES applications must meet the following qualifying criteria:

- PSES must be an adjunct to a non-amateur radio permanent event display or museum; it must not be an amateur radio event in itself.

⁶ Where 'x' represents a digit, 'c' represents a digit or letter, and 'a' represents a letter.

- The curated display/event (etc) must be of national or international significance; and
- Those running the museum (etc) must agree to the PSES being associated with their display.

Duration

PSES are valid for 5 years. Variations are renewable every five years, upon reapplication. The PSES variations that we grant all expire on the same date, allowing us to review them.

Call sign format

The call sign that we authorise for a PSES will reflect the station, for example GB0IWM for the Imperial War Museum. The format of PSES call signs that we assign is 'GB' followed by 2 or 3 digits (0-9) and 2 or 3 letters (e.g., 'GBxcca')⁷.

6.5 Special contest call signs (SCC)

An SCC is a short form call sign (four characters) that identifies an amateur radio station participating in a contest. The purpose of many contests is to make as many contacts as possible in a given time, therefore a short call sign is quick to say or to key (Morse Code) increasing the number of possible contacts a radio amateur can obtain.

The RSGB processes applications for Special contest call signs for Ofcom, although it remains Ofcom's decision on whether or not to grant a variation.

Eligibility

SCC NoVs are available to Full Licence holders only, including Club Licences. To obtain an SCC, individual licensees (or the licence-holder in the case of club licensees) must supply evidence of having entered at least five contests from the list supplied on the [RSGB website](#), and the applicant must have accrued five achievement points from the contests entered.

Duration

SCCs are valid for up to 5 years; all SCC NoVs expire (and are renewable) at the end of the same 5 year period. All applications for SCC NoV (including renewals) are made to the RSGB, who undertake administration for Ofcom.

Format

The SCC is in the format 'G' or 'M', followed by a chosen digit and a chosen suffix letter. Examples are G8Z or M7R. An RSL may be used with these SCCs.

Location

The SCC may be used only in the UK or Crown Dependencies.

6.6 Beacons and Repeaters

Some beacons, gateways and repeaters will still require an NoV to operate, and individuals wishing to deploy these will have to go through the current process to obtain one. The below text sets out the criteria that requires a NoV:

- Intermediate and Full licensees who wish to operate beacons above 25 Watts ERP, and

⁷ Where 'x' represents a digit, 'c' represents a digit or letter, and 'a' represents a letter.

- Full licensees who wish to operate a repeater above 5 Watts ERP.

It is important to note that, where a gateway operates in a dog-leg (via a repeater), the general rules for the use of a repeater will continue to apply. For more information on rules around repeaters, please see Section 4 above, and below.

Process

Applications for these NoVs are applied for via the RSGB Website, [here](#). Once the relevant checks have been conducted, the RSGB will send the completed NoV to Ofcom and our Spectrum Licensing team will send it out to the applicant.

Should the application be in a band requiring coordination, we will engage with the relevant third parties and, if approved our Spectrum Licensing team will inform the RSGB and the applicant. If the clearance request is not approved, we will inform the RSGB who will liaise with the applicant to seek alternative arrangements.

6.7 Additional frequency bands

In addition to the frequency bands listed in Schedule 1 of the Amateur Condition's Booklet, access to the following frequency bands is available via an NoV to the licence. The bands are:

- 70.5-71.5 MHz;
- 146-147 MHz; and
- above 275 GHz.

Access to the 70 MHz and 146 MHz bands can be agreed by applying for an NoV from this [website](#).

6.8 Special Research Permit (SRP)

An SRP allows the licensee to vary the licence in order to carry out research and experimentation that might not be permitted under the licence. This is normally to access frequencies above 275 GHz or use powers significantly higher than allowed under the licence. Each request is assessed on a case by case basis. In some cases we may advise that an [Innovation and Trial](#) licence may be the appropriate licence. The SRP application form can be found [here](#).

7. Advice to UK radio amateurs operating in other countries

The UK is a member of [CEPT](#), the European regional organisation that deals with postal and telecommunications issues. Reciprocal arrangements have been agreed within CEPT (and some other countries) concerning licensed radio amateurs. These arrangements detail how a licensed radio amateur from one country may use amateur radio equipment in another country.

The bands and frequencies available to amateur radio services vary, and individual countries may impose different restrictions. UK radio amateurs wishing to operate overseas must familiarise themselves and comply with all locally applicable restrictions in the country they are operating in and abide by the local authority in charge of radiocommunications. When operating on a ship or aircraft, different rules apply depending on location and the country where the ship or aircraft is registered. Before operating a radio amateur must have the consent of the captain or person in charge of the ship or aircraft.

7.1 Operating overseas as a UK radio amateur

Each country has its own licensing arrangements, and the holder of a UK Amateur Radio Licence must ask the relevant licensing authority about the arrangements for obtaining a licence.

The use of amateur radio equipment in some overseas countries may be covered by [CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01](#). The Recommendation makes provisions for amateurs to operate for a short period, usually up to three months, in other participating countries without the need for an individual authorisation from the host country.

A person who has passed the UK Amateur Full examination may be able to obtain a licence in another country if that country applies to [CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02](#). To get the overseas licence, a UK HAREC is needed. These are normally issued alongside the Amateur Full examination certificate by the RSGB. For existing Full Licensees if you have misplaced yours, or don't have one, you can apply for one from Ofcom. These are only available to holders of the Amateur Radio (Full) Licence, or to those who can otherwise demonstrate that they have passed a UK Full examination.

If the UK has a bilateral reciprocal agreement with the country, the holder of a UK Amateur Radio (Full) Licence may be able to obtain a licence from the other country. The UK radio amateur must consult the relevant licensing authorities in the other country on the arrangements for obtaining a licence there.

When operating in another country, including its territorial waters and airspace, you are required to follow the rules set by the administration of that country. This may mean that use of certain frequency bands or types of operation, such as airborne, may not be permitted. For example, the band at 70 – 70.5 MHz is authorised in the UK but has not been allocated elsewhere in ITU Region 1 for amateur services. This means that some frequency bands may only be used within the UK and its territorial seas or airspace and not beyond it. Similarly, UK radio amateurs must comply with the relevant regional rules set out in the Radio Regulations when operating in international waters or airspace on a UK-registered aircraft or ship. It is a condition of the licence that the licensee does not cause undue interference to any wireless telegraphy.

7.2 Use on a ship or aircraft outside of the UK

Prior to using any radio equipment on a ship or aircraft you must have permission of the ship or aircraft captain or whoever is in charge at the time. It should be noted that an amateur radio licence does not provide any broader authorisation related to airborne or maritime operations. Nor does it supersede any safety rules or requirements.

7.2.1 UK registered ship or aircraft

If the ship or aircraft is UK registered your UK licence provisions continue to apply in UK or international waters or airspace. When operating in international waters or airspace you can only use frequency bands which are both (i) authorised under the Licence (including those for low power airborne use where relevant); and (ii) allocated to the Amateur service in the Radio Regulations for the ITU region you are operating in.

When in the waters or airspace of a foreign country, licensees would fall under that country's jurisdiction. As this would be classed as operating overseas, only holders of a Full Licence would be able to seek authorisation to operate. If the foreign administration is part of CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02 or the UK has a bilateral agreement operation may be permitted. However, licensees must follow the rules and regulations for that country noting that in some cases airborne use may not be permitted and the transmit frequencies and permitted powers may be different to those in the UK Licence.

7.2.2 Non-UK registered ship or aircraft

If the ship or aircraft is not UK registered, you can only operate in international waters or airspace if authorised by the country where the ship or aircraft is registered. This would be the same as operating overseas as a UK amateur and is only available to holders of a Full Licence. If authorised, you would have to adhere to the terms and conditions set out by the administration of the country of registration. Please note that some administrations may not permit airborne use under their Amateur Radio licence.

7.3 Your call sign beyond UK jurisdiction

If operating overseas under CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, you are required to use the appropriate country prefix before your call sign. Details of these are listed in the document.

When providing your call sign please note that an RSL denotes a part of the UK, or Crown Dependency, in which the station is operating from. If operating in another country or beyond UK territorial seas, there is no applicable RSL available. You should speak to the licensing administration of the country you will be transmitting in regarding licence conditions and operating practices.

8. Future Changes

8.1 Overview

As part of our recent review of the Amateur Radio Licensing framework, we made the decision to introduce several changes to the amateur radio policies, licence, and terms and conditions. We will implement these changes in three phases; this guidance will be updated to reflect current rules and processes.

8.2 Timeline

Most of the changes we have made will be effective immediately as the Licence terms and conditions have been varied as part of Phase 1 of the implementation timeline. However, some changes rely on updates to our existing system or a move to the new licensing platform.

Implementing the remaining changes will fall into two phases, as set out below:

Phase 2 (Licensing platform modification or other Ofcom action required) -we plan for this to be in 2024	Phase 3 (new licensing platform required) – we plan for this to be later in the 2024/25 financial year
New Intermediate M8 and M9 call sign prefix.	Improvements to the online revalidation process.
Restriction on the number of call signs an individual can hold.	Holding of a single personal licence and revocation of lower licence as licensees progress.
Liberalisation of the use of Special Event Station NoV.	Choice of a wider range of unused amateur radio call signs, via the online portal.
	Ability to change a call sign periodically.

These plans may be subject to change, and we will provide further updates on the implementation timelines as needed.

8.3 Details of changes

8.3.1 Intermediate call sign changes

Later in the year, we will stop issuing '2' format call signs for Intermediate stations. Instead, we will begin to issue 'M8' and 'M9' call signs for new Intermediate applicants, and former Intermediate Licence holders returning to the hobby.

Existing Intermediate licensees can opt to change to a call sign with the new prefix. To facilitate those who wish to move to the new format, we will reserve the corresponding call sign suffix in the new format – it will be available only to the current Intermediate licensee for three years. This means, for example, '2#0aaa' will be available as 'M8aaa', and '2#1aaa' will be available as 'M9aaa'.

8.3.2 Restrictions on Licences and Call Signs

8.3.2.1 Personal Licences

Individuals will be limited to holding one personal licence, and therefore call sign, at any one time (excluding any temporary special event call signs).

When a licensee progresses to the next level of licence, their lower-level licence will be revoked. Licensees can retain their highest-level licence; in cases where licensees hold multiple Full Licences, will be required to nominate those they wish to keep, and surrender the others.

We will vary any existing licence which permits more than one call sign to reduce the number to one per personal licence.

Should you wish to surrender any licence before these changes take effect, please contact Spectrum Licensing who will assist you in doing so.

8.3.2.2 Club Licences

Full (Club) licensees will be able to hold five licences, and therefore call signs. This is to enable more flexibility for clubs to simultaneously operate in different modes, bands, and potentially at different locations.

8.3.3 Liberalisation of the Special Event Station NoV

We will discard the distinction between SES and SSES NoVs, permitting the use of a more permissive SES NoV. This change will include:

- Extending the available call signs to a maximum 11 characters in length, in the format 'GBxxxxxx'. Licensees will be able to choose any SES call sign, as long as it starts with 'GBx' and ends with a letter.
- Making permanent the relaxation of the requirement that an SES event must be available to the general public.
- Reducing the 'resting period' for a call sign from two years to one year. We will retain the six-month limit around when an SES call sign can be applied for.
- Making the NoV valid for up to one year, instead of a maximum 28 days.
- Permitting the dates of operation to not be consecutive.
- Permitting mobile, or peripatetic operation.

Individuals will be able to apply for this NoV via the online licensing portal and the previous criteria for obtaining an SSES will no longer be required.

At the time these changes come into effect, any active NoVs will remain valid until their expiry date. Once this has passed, applicants should familiarise themselves with conditions the new SES NoV permits.

8.3.4 Call sign changes

New applicants will be able to choose from a wider range of unused call signs via the online licensing portal. This includes old call signs, that have 'rested' for a period of at least 5 years, to ensure the unique identity of a station is maintained. During the 5 year resting period, a call sign will not be available for re-issue under any circumstances.

Licensees will also be able to change their call sign periodically. This will also be limited to 5 year periods to minimise risk of confusion and maintain the unique identity of a station, meaning that if a person obtained their call sign on 1 January 2022, they will be able to change their call sign on 1 January 2027. This facility will be available via the licensing platform and will not require an individual to submit evidence to support their request.