

Amateur Licence Review

Pre-consultation discussion

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Information to stimulate thinking

- Amateur Radio is an Engineering and Scientific hobby that encourages experimentation and development in all aspects of technical and operational skills in radio communication.
- We are thinking about some proposals that could make minor changes to the licensing arrangements. The purpose of sharing these thoughts with you is to give you an idea of the scope of the licence review.
- It is not intended to be a radical change but is geared to be more explicit with regard to some of the existing clauses, operational practices and to help extend the services available to Amateur Radio to encourage development of modern technologies.
- We are not intending to get into a follow up wider dialogue until we publish the consultation, however we are happy to hear your thoughts and ideas at this event.
- I am not going to attempt to answer the issues discussed here or pre-empt further thinking or responses from our formal consultation.

Amateur Radio Licence Review – Scope Summary

- Triggered by the need to make changes to the frequency schedule because of the Public Sector Spectrum Release
- Every UK Amateur licence will need to be re-issued
 - Expensive because there are 81,880 on issue.
 - Opportunity to improve the clauses and bring the licence up-to-date
- In line with the key purpose of Amateur Radio we want to encourage progression from Foundation, through Intermediate to Full licence level.
- Ofcom desire to tidy database with one call sign per amateur
- Improve the text of clauses to help amateurs interpret the intention of regional descriptor and when they are operating stations away from their station address.
- Clarification of any UK specific permissions – e.g. explain that when a licence has been varied it is unlikely that the variation would apply if the amateur operated elsewhere.
- Several wording amendments to aid clarity

Public Sector Spectrum Release (PSSR)

- MoD will release spectrum in 2.3 and 3.4 GHz bands to Ofcom to award.
- 2310 – 2350MHz still being considered regarding if the MoD can share with both Amateurs and Programme Making and Special Events users
- Spectrum release now estimated to happen in 2015/16
- VHF consultation will go-ahead – in November (10 weeks)

Licence Review – Key messages

- Signal the Amateur Licensing arrangements are intended to be progressive
 - Foundation
 - Intermediate
 - Full
- Desire to embed the progressive concept more thoroughly – original intention was to encourage progression
- Ofcom currently considering incentivising progress from one level to the next
 - Should this concept apply to change the system for existing licensees
 - Are there some groups that don't need to progress
- Should the mentoring concept be used more to encourage progression?

Policy Considerations

- The use of secondary identifiers
 - Original intention was to identify which part of the UK the Amateurs fixed station is located.
 - Practice seems to be the secondary locator is used to identify the country a mobile or alternative station is currently operating in
 - Our wish to understand the non-regulatory impact of any changes, both nationally and internationally
 - We may consult on this in order to clarify how best to use the secondary identifier

Club Licenses

- Club Licences are linked as a variation to a nominated full licensed amateur
 - Supported by 2 other club members
- Issue to address is that if the individual holding the variation leaves the club he/she has to agree to release the licence / call sign. Providing that person remains licensed Ofcom has no reason to revoke the licence but often the call sign is associated with the club.
 - The RSGB has requested that we consider how to link the call sign to the club.
 - We are considering if the licence can be linked to an official of the club
 - Can the club / association be considered as a legal entity/person
 - Identify any other options that would meet WT Act requirements.
- SES and SSES NoV's are only issued to individuals
 - Consider if these variations can be made available to clubs
 - Implications of the responsibility linking back to an individual

Repeaters and Beacons

- There are a few instances where Licensees have been granted a NoV for a Repeater or a Beacon but then it the repeater has not been implemented.
 - This effectively blocks the assigned frequency for re-assignment
 - This is not optimal use of the spectrum – a key duty of Ofcom
 - No clear way of revoking the NoV so that the spectrum can be released/re-assigned.
- Options for us to consider:
 - Fix the term of availability of the assignment – keeper would then need to re-apply
 - Implement a 'use it or lose it' condition – may not be easy to enforce
 - Test if clause 4(2)e of the amateur licence provides for revocation on spectrum management grounds.

NoV's that give access to spectrum not in the standard schedule

- Currently these NoV's relate to the individual Amateur's call sign
- Should we also allow these additional frequencies to be available to Clubs and Full reciprocal licences?
 - Consider if there are any reason why we shouldn't extend this privilege.



Clarify validity of NoV's

- Complex issues around the interpretation of TR 61-01 as this applies to individuals and not clubs.
- Variations only apply to the UK and Crown Dependencies and not all CEPT countries
- Consultation will address clarifying this situation in the licence clauses
- Ofcom can not make authorisations that cross into another administrations authority.

Provisions for Trainees using Stations under supervision

- This issue relates to an individual who has completed a recognised training course but has not yet received his/her licence.
 - Whilst on the course the individual was covered as they were attending a formally constituted class as part of a Recognised Training Course but once the exam is taken the course ends.
 - This is a minor issue as the delay between the examination and the receipt of a licence should be short, however there needs to be more explicit guidance.
 - Consider if the pass certificate can cover a limited period

Certain Overseas Authorities have not recognised the validity of the UK Amateur Licence.

- Some overseas administrations expect to see the licence document bear a signature and an expiry date (or both)
 - Considering how to make the validity of the licence more obvious
 - Consider if a 99 year term would resolve the expiry date issue but this needs to be qualified by re-validation
 - Instead of an expiry date we could refer to the next re-validation date
 - Another reminder to re-validate your licence

Call Signs – one per station

- Wide range of issues to consider.
 - Strong desire to encourage amateurs to progress through the licence categories
 - Consider revocation of the lower category when the next level is achieved
 - Consider if one licence is issued and then varied as the amateur progresses
 - Consider the existing licensees – can this apply retrospectively or only going forwards



Airborne Use

- Non amateurs have enquired regarding the use of amateur spectrum for telecommand, telemetry and/or remote sensing downlinks from UAV's
- The RSGB is supportive of this to be included within the consultation
- Consider if the current rules could be relaxed for Amateur experimentation
- If they can be relaxed it would be for full licensed amateurs only
- In primary bands only
- Any agreement would need CAA approval
- CAA recently published CAP 722 regarding UAV's etc (need to fully understand this guidance)

Remote Operating

- More clarity on remote operating needed, specifically to allow more general usage under clause 10(3)
- Working with the RSGB to clarify this area
- Care not to contravene the non-commercial nature of amateur radio
- Do internet connections require a licensing framework
 - If so, can this be in the standard Terms and Conditions or should this be through the NoV framework



Ash Gohil – Licensing Issues

Re Validation

- A Reminder to re-validate your licence. It is the individual Amateur's responsibility to ensure they update contact information and re-validate their licence ***at least once every 5 years***
- If more than one licence is held each one needs to be re-validated separately
- Club and reciprocal licensees – need to contact Ofcom as we currently don't have on-line capability for re-validation.



Licence Suffixes (/A, /P, /M and /MM)

- Improve the definitions
- Consider current practice
- What is adopted internationally
- Maritime Mobile – further clarity on when /MM should be used
 - What if the vessel is moored
 - Inland waterways
 - European waterways have their own rules - RAINWAT



Direct Access to Full Licence

- Current process is to progress through the Foundation, Intermediate to Full licence
- Consider is a streamlined direct access process can be workable
- Terms and Conditions are covered in Foundation and Intermediate courses
 - New structure required
- Regulatory issues because the limitations order requires a pass at each level
- Will pursue this with the RSGB and the RCF
- Possibly outside the scope of the licence review

Hot off the Press

Citizens' Band (CB) radio Authorising Amplitude Modulation (AM) modes of Operation

- Agreed to implement the ECC (11)03 decision.
 - Next steps
 - Consult on implementation proposal
 - Equipment to meet EN 300 433-1 specification
 - Consult on Exemption Regulations
 - Likely to come into force in April/May 2014



Discussion



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