

## **Updating the Amateur Radio Licence**

This document is a commentary on the proposals published for consultation by Ofcom. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Ofcom paper and to assist radio amateurs who wish to respond to Ofcom. It is not a RSGB response to the proposals – this will be formulated in the light of discussions on the RSGB website and any other inputs from the amateur community.

### **Overview**

The RSGB and others were given the opportunity to provide input to Ofcom last year by way of pre-consultation. A number of potential areas for inclusion in the review were identified and discussed widely within the amateur radio community. Several of these have not been addressed in the document and thus, for the avoidance of doubt.

- There are no proposals to change the frequencies available to Foundation or Intermediate Licensees nor impose expiry dates on such licences.
- There are no proposals to compel progression from one level to the next. The current privileges available to Full Licensees only (access to 472 KHz and 5 MHz bands, operating abroad, holding club licences) are maintained.
- There are no proposals to introduce a single callsign per licensee nor restrict further the number of callsigns that an individual licensee may hold.
- There are no proposed changes to the power limits within the current terms and conditions.

In these areas, therefore, there would be no change to the existing arrangements.

### **Regional Secondary Locators (RSL)**

With the exception of Intermediate Licences, the proposals would allow amateurs to decide for themselves whether to use the approved RSLs along with the established optional suffixes. However, it would be for the individual amateur to ensure that their station was clearly identified and, if there were ever circumstances when the use of a RSL and/or suffix would obscure the station identity, then the onus would be on the individual to revert to their base callsign.

For Intermediate Licence Holders, RSLs would not be optional. The proposal is that the RSL would be based on the main station address, and the callsign would remain unmodified by any other RSL no matter where in the UK/Crown dependencies the station was operated from. For example, 2E0ABC (main station address in England) when operating from Wales would be required to use 2E0ABC, and 2W0ABC would not be available to them.

Visitors operating under the CEPT arrangements would follow a similar protocol i.e. they would be required as a minimum to prefix their home callsign with M/ but they may, optionally, use the appropriate RSL and/or suffix, whereas at present that RSL is mandated (ie Mx/). If F2ABC were operating from a house in Wales, therefore, they would be required to identify their station as M/F2ABC, but they may choose to use MW/F2ABC. For completeness, if they operated their station in a vehicle in Wales, they would be required to identify their station as M/F2ABC, but could also do so using MW/F2ABC, M/F2ABC/M, or MW/F2ABC/M.

There would be, as now, be no facility for amateurs with a UK issued licence to use the CEPT prefix M/ nor its regional variants e.g. G3ABC operating from Wales might use GW3ABC if they wished, but not MW/G3ABC.

In future, if the proposals are accepted, all callsigns issued by Ofcom (in the current series) would be in the form of M0xxx, 20xxx and M6xxx i.e. there would be no inclusion of a RSL on the front of the licence document, no matter where the main station address was in the UK.

It is not clear from the consultation what Ofcom's approach would be to existing Foundation and Full licence holders who have a RSL embedded within their station callsign.

### **Transmission of Callsigns**

Except when operating on the 5 MHz band the onus would pass to the individual amateur to decide how often to identify their station. The proposal would mean that, in practice, there need be no change to the current well established custom and practice, but there would be no licence standard which could be relied on the event of a complaint that a station had failed to identify itself sufficiently.