

Page 28, Para.3.

AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME LICENCES - This paragraph gives a clear definition of the structure and scope of Licences issued by the International Telegraphic Union for Aeronautical & Maritime purposes. Radio Communication has no international boundaries hence the ITU is the ultimate authority.

AMATEUR SERVICE - This is unique and has always been a special case providing emergency communications at short notice for a disaster on any scale. For example the Lockerbie air crash in the UK and countless other instances including the present 'Tsunami' disaster in SE Asia.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS. - Amateur operators are able to provide the Radio Amateur Emergency Service (RAYNET) as defined in the Amateur Licence. National services i.e. Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance now have the "Airwave" communication system, a great improvement but still subject to breakdowns e.g. in Wiltshire recently. The White paper re the 'UK Resilience' scheme confirms that Raynet will be required for communications in support of Emergency Control Officers. As well as Raynet, in an emergency any available Amateur would assist and must be identified with a callsign.

NATIONAL SECURITY. - Possibly all Amateurs should be vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau, before the issue of a Licence and unique Callsign. Amateur operators identity is essential and a simple licence scheme will not suffice.

POWER - The UK already has one of the lowest maximum power levels. Experienced operators might have to apply for a Notice of Variation to use power in excess of 100 W.

COMMENT - In my opinion Ofcom has not given a fair summary of the Amateur Radio Service and I would suggest that Page 28. Para.4 be replaced with the following-

AMATEUR LICENCES - The spectrum for Amateur Radio use is internationally harmonised and the technology which can be used is specified by international agreement.

The International Telegraphic Union requires that a licence be issued to users with a unique callsign allocated and registered. The Amateur Licence is granted for the purpose of self training in Radio communication.

Operators must hold an Amateur Radio Certificate in order to operate at various levels as part of the training requirement. Licensees are required to comply with relevant provisions of the Telecommunication Convention.

AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE - Should become self-regulating under the direction of the National body the RADIO SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN with power to issue Licences.

BASIS - A simpler access to Amateur licences. This scheme is only an example of what is possible, it needs honing to approach OFCOM'S wish for a lighter touch.

LICENCE SCHEME - There could be a new qualification known as the Amateur Radio OPERATING Certificate with practical training in Radio Operating. The keyword is OPERATING.

RADIO CLUBS to provide training using approved Full licencees in a similar way to the previous Novice scheme.

TWO STAGE LICENCE

1. - FOUNDATION COURSE

Candidates to register with R.S.G.B and be issued with a Callsign

2. - FULL LICENCE

Will depend on holding a Foundation licence.

Candidates will be issued with a Manual which includes a Logbook and a Syllabus with list of tasks to be completed. Tasks will include skills such as

Operating procedures - Phonetic alphabet - Bandplans Logkeeping - Interference - Setting power level Antenna matching - Tuning an ASTU - Overmodulation/ALC Netting.

Logbooks will require a minimum number entries for contacts with different stations.

Club tutors will sign the manual as skills are achieved. All to be completed before On-Air tests by two independent approved members of a different Club Their appropriate signatures in the manual will enable a Full licence to be granted.

Moderation of results to be made by an RSGB scheme of random checks and inspections.

3. - LICENCES

To be issued for longer period e.g. 10 Yrs.to reduce administration costs.