

SPECTRUM FRAMEWORK REVIEW

As a radio amateur, I am concerned at the proposal by Ofcom in "initiating a project to consider the options for moving to a general authorisation or radically simplifying access to amateur bands" (page 28).

This "project" gives the impression that a full and objective review of the various alternatives will be undertaken. Yet we read on page 4 that, "We are also considering the possibilities of removing the need to have a licence in areas such as amateur.... although technology and usage restrictions will continue to apply." It would seem that Ofcom have already made up their minds which way to go.

At the moment, radio amateurs have to pass a series of exams to show that they understand the basic principles of their equipment, how to ensure that their transmitted signal stays within the frequency and power restrictions of their licence and the possible problems that can cause the transmitter to interfere with other users of the radio spectrum.

It is quite permissible for the radio amateur to design, construct and operate his own equipment, since he has demonstrated the technical knowledge and capability to ensure his equipment will conform to the licence conditions. If it does cause interference, he will know how to overcome the problem.

It is the role of spectrum manager, Ofcom, "to ensure that.... no two users interfere with each other", (page 3). If Ofcom proposes to relax the knowledge and skill requirement by the operator to gain access to the amateur bands, the only way left to ensure that their stated role is fulfilled is to licence the equipment. The consequence is that the long tradition of radio amateurs to operate experimental equipment they have made themselves will be brought to an end. We will all be forced to use commercial equipment which has passed certain prescribed tests. The very first condition of use listed in the Amateur Radio Licence states that, "The Licensee shall use the Station for the Purpose of self-training in communication by radio telecommunications which use (without limiting the generality of the foregoing) includes technical investigation." This primary condition will have to go or be drastically modified.

As someone who enjoys building and using my own equipment, I will most definitely oppose any proposal to alter the definition of a Radio Amateur which removes or waters down in any significant way, the primary condition of the Amateur Radio Licence quoted above.

Yours sincerely,

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