

# Programme Making and Special Events (Including Radio Microphones)

(previously Radiocommunications Agency information sheet RA 325)

## 1 Introduction

This information sheet is aimed at programme-makers and others wishing to use radio at entertainment, public and sporting events.

### What is PMSE?

'Programme making and special events' (PMSE) is a broad term that covers:

- the making of a programme for broadcast;
- the making of a film, presentation, advertisement or audio/video tape; and
- the staging or performance of a special event. (Special events – for example, entertainment and sporting events, music and religious festivals, and air, agricultural and county shows – typically last between one day and a few weeks.)

A PMSE licence allows you to use a wide range of radio equipment that is suitable for the above applications.

A PMSE licence does not cover the use of radio apparatus for general communications supporting a production or event (e.g. security, safety or catering services). These uses are covered by other types of radio licence such as Private Business Radio, Public Mobile Communications and Citizens' Band. The Fixed Services and Satellite Services licensing arrangements may also apply in some cases. For information about any of these licences, contact Ofcom or visit our website – see Section 7.

### What is Ofcom?

Ofcom (the Office of Communications) is the UK's new communications industry regulator, with wide-ranging responsibilities across the UK's communications markets. An independent regulatory body, in December 2003 Ofcom inherited the Radiocommunications Agency's responsibility for managing the UK civil radio spectrum.

## 2 Do I need a licence?

### a) Licensing requirements

It is illegal to use a radio transmitter unless:

- you have a licence issued under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949; or
- the transmitter equipment is specifically exempted from licensing (see Section 5).

Unauthorised use of equipment could lead to immediate termination of use, a fine of up to £5,000 and/or six months' imprisonment on summary conviction, or an unlimited fine and two years' imprisonment and forfeiture of equipment on conviction on indictment.

### b) Who should hold the licence?

The PMSE licence should be held by the person who intends to use, or to control those who use, the licensed equipment.

If a company holds a licence, its employees are covered by that licence.

If anyone other than the licensee or the licensee's employees is to use the equipment, the licensee must:

- give that person written authority to do so; and
- ensure that the person complies with the licence conditions.

A company hiring out radio microphones may hold a licence itself and authorise its customers to use those microphones. It will need to issue each customer with a written permit, subjecting him/her to the licence conditions. Copies of a model permit (SAP3) are available from JFMG – see Section 7.

### c) Applying for a licence

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom is now responsible for issuing licences for radio equipment. (However, this does not affect the validity of licences issued by or on behalf of the Radiocommunications Agency before the end of 2003.)

Ofcom has contracted JFMG Ltd to manage and license the radio spectrum used for PMSE. This means that JFMG is authorised to grant PMSE licences on Ofcom's behalf.

To apply for a licence, write to JFMG at the address given in Section 7, explaining the type of radio use you are interested in. You will be sent an application form and further information on your licensing options. You can also download application forms from the JFMG website ([www.jfmg.co.uk](http://www.jfmg.co.uk)).

When you apply for a licence, or for an additional frequency assignment, you must enclose the full fee (see below). You can pay by cheque (made payable to "JFMG Ltd Trust Account" or by credit/debit card.

If your application needs to be processed outside normal working hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays), you will have to pay an extra £55 per frequency assignment.

### d) Licence fees

Until the end of 2003, licence fees were set in Regulations made by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Any changes to fees made since then have been set in regulations made by Ofcom, and have been placed in Parliament in accordance with new procedures under the Communications Act 2003. Licence fees are generally reviewed annually.

Details of the current licence fees can be obtained from JFMG or Ofcom – see Section 7.

## 3 Spectrum available for PMSE

A wide range of spectrum is available for licensing. This is listed in JFMG's register of frequencies, available free of charge from JFMG – see Section 7.

When you apply for a licence, JFMG will contact you to discuss your requirements and the features of the equipment

you wish to use, so that you can be assigned the most suitable frequencies for you (subject to availability).

## 4 Equipment requirements

Licensed equipment must comply with *UK Radio Interface Requirement IR2038*, and with the *Radio Equipment and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment (R&TTE) Directive*.

IR2038 and a document entitled *Guidance for Manufacturers on the Introduction of the R&TTE Directive* are available free of charge from Ofcom – see Section 7.

## 5 Licence-exempt equipment

The following types of equipment may be suitable for PMSE but do not require a licence:

- Wide-band radio microphones with a 0 of 10mW or less do not need licensing, as long as they operate on the frequencies 173.8, 174.1, 174.5, 174.8 and 175.0 MHz. They must also conform to the specification MPT 1345 or ETSI Specification EN 300 422.
- Low-power cordless audio equipment may be operated in the range 863 to 865 MHz, with a maximum power of 10mW. Equipment must conform to the ETSI Specification EN 300 220-1.
- Low-power video applications may be operated at 1394 MHz, with a maximum power of 500mW and a 10 MHz bandwidth. Equipment must conform to the specification MPT 1349.
- Low-power visual image transmission equipment may be operated in the range 2.400 to 2.483 GHz, with a maximum power of 10mW and a 20 MHz bandwidth. Equipment must conform to the ETSI Specification I-ETS 300 440.
- A number of bands for low-power telemetry and telecommand devices are exempt from licensing.
- PMR 446 is a licence-exempt, short-range voice communication system, providing a basic radio service for both business and non business users. PMR 446 has replaced the Short Range Business Radio (SRBR) speech service.

Information sheets OfW69 (*Short-Range Devices*) and OfW57 (*PMR 446*) contain further information on licence-exempt equipment.

## 6 Complaints and suggestions

If you have a complaint or a suggestion about PMSE licensing, please contact JFMG – see Section 7.

If you cannot resolve a complaint with JFMG, you may write to:

**Ofcom**

Programme Making and Special Events Section  
Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 9HA

Tel: 020 7981 3192/3085/3184  
E-mail: pmse@ofcom.org.uk

In considering disputes about licensing matters, we will require JFMG to explain the reasons for the action that is the subject of the dispute. We will decide how the dispute should be resolved, and give reasons for its decision – which will be binding on JFMG.

**7 Further information**

For PMSE licence applications and enquiries about PMSE licensing, please contact:

**JFMG Ltd**

33-34 Alfred Place  
London  
WC1E 7DP

Tel: 020 7299 8660  
Fax: 020 7299 8661  
E-mail: info@jfmfg.co.uk  
Website: www.jfmfg.co.uk

The JFMG office is open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays). Outside these hours a co-ordinator (tel. 07050 177335) is available for emergency frequency assignments.

Ofcom produces a range of information sheets, UK Radio Interface Requirements and other publications. These are available free of charge on our website ([www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)), or hard copies can be ordered from:

**Ofcom Contact Centre**

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2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 9HA

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