

Amateur Radio Clubs and Societies

Introduction

These organisations provide an opportunity for individuals for interested individuals to meet, and take part in or discuss some of the many aspects of the amateur radio service. The wide range of radio amateur's interests in experimentation and intercommunications has led to the formation of a variety of clubs.

Many clubs arrange lectures and visits for their members on a wide range of topics. Other clubs specialise in particular aspects of the amateur service e.g. television, contests, computers, repeaters and RAYNET. Some clubs run examination classes and Morse classes to help their members obtain their licences. They also organise amateur radio rallies, which, as well as being social events, provide an opportunity to obtain components and equipment from traders. Clubs may now allow non-licensed persons to use the club call sign to send greetings messages.

What's in a name?

To avoid confusion over club identities it always helps, particularly in the issuing of licences, renewals and reminders, if the club title is original and distinctive.

What are the licensing requirements of a club?

Under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949, a licence issued by the Secretary of State is required before any person may establish or use any station for Wireless Telegraphy or install or use any apparatus for wireless telegraphy in the place within the UK and its territorial waters. This means that clubs, in common with individual radio amateurs, need a licence.

What are the responsibilities of a person holding the licence on behalf of the club?

The club licence holder should ensure that all the licence conditions are met. They are responsible for making sure that the licence is current while the club exists, by making the licence fee payment before the licence expires (a record should be kept by the licence holder and the Treasurer if they are different people). Club transmitting equipment must be secure from unauthorised people at all times. It must be emphasised that although the club licence holder has the name on the club licence, he or she has no more right to use the club call sign than any other club member.

What determines the class of licence to be applied for?

The club If a club already has one class of licence ('A' or 'B') an application for the other class of licence must be supported by members of the existing club under whose name the new call sign is to be issued.

If you are forming a new club then the make-up of your proposed club is important.

For a Class A club licence, the club must have at least three members who hold a Class A licence, one of whom will hold the licence on behalf of the club

For a Class B club licence, the club must have at least three members who hold either a Class A or a Class B licence, one of whom will hold the licence on behalf of the club

In the case of educational establishments, only one licence member is required.

Club call signs - do they differ from the personal call sign?

Applications for a club licence are treated much in the same way as individual applications. The main difference is that this type of licence is held on behalf of a group of licensees rather than by any one licensee as his/her property. Where a club wishes to inherit the call sign of one of its distinguished members and it is clear that the original holder wanted the club to adopt that call sign for example, via a will, then such a request may be considered.

How many call signs may a club hold?

Only one licence of each category, e.g. one Class A and one Class B. The Agency considers this sufficient for all club activities, including contests.

Who can operate a club station?

Holders of a UK licence or a Radio Amateurs Examination Certificate, under the super-vision of a suitably licensed club member can operate a club station. The bands and modes used are determined by the class of the licence of the club station, not the licence of the "supervisor".

For example, the terms of a Class B licence apply whether a Class A or a Class B licence holder is operating a Class B club station.

The terms of a Class A licence apply whether a Class A or a Class B licence holder is operating a Class A club station, provided that operation by a Class B is supervised by a club member who holds a Class A licence.

So, a Class B licensee can operate a Class A station on the HF bands under the supervision of a club member who holds a Class A licence. This provides a good opportunity to experience HF operation before obtaining a Class A licence. Intermediate/Foundation licence holders may also

operate under such supervision.

Clubs (and any holder of a full amateur radio licence) may allow non-licensed persons to send greetings messages as long as the following conditions are met:

- It is under the direct supervision of the licensee or other authorised club member (in case of a licence held on behalf of a club) who must operate the transmitter and identify the station; and
- Greetings messages may be sent and received only within the UK or to and from stations in the USA, Maldives, Gibraltar, Malta and Falkland Islands. Greetings messages may also be sent to and from stations in Canada and Pitcairn Islands provided that each message does not exceed two minutes and that each person only sends one message to each station.

Can a new club ask for the lapsed call sign of a defunct club?

Only if ex-members of the club are involved in setting up the new club and if the application is supported, in writing by the ex-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary (or equivalents) of the club which previously held the call sign, can a request be entertained.

This is to ensure that if ex-members revive the club, they will have the opportunity to use their old club's call sign.

If there are no living members or the requested information is not forthcoming then the call sign will lapse. Please note that the Agency does not have the resources to do research on behalf of applicants and so the onus will be firmly on you to provide the supporting documentation.

Can Intermediates/Foundation licensees apply for a club call sign?

No, as they are not able to supervise anyone it is felt that a club call sign would not be appropriate.

Contact Points:

For all enquiries concerning individual licences or their issue:

Radio Licensing Centre (RLC)

P.O BOX 884

Bristol, BS99 5LF

Tel: 0117 925 8333

Minicom: 0117 921 9550

In order to comply with the requirements of the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act (CPI) 1996, all telephone calls to the RLC are recorded.

For enquiries on the Intermediate/Foundation Licensing training course (for this please mark your envelope Intermediate/ Foundation Training), the Morse Test:

RSGB

Lambda House
Cranborne Road
Potters Bar
Herts EN6 3JE
Tel: 01707 659015

For enquiries on the IRAE (subject 773) or the RAE (subject 765):

City and Guilds of London Institute

1 Giltspur Street
London EC1A 9DD
Tel: 020 7294 2468

For other enquiries on amateur radio:

Amateur Radio Services

Radiocommunications Agency

Wyndham House
189 Marsh Wall
London E14 9SX
Tel: 020 7211 0159
Tel: 020 7211 0160
Tel: 020 7211 0161(Answer phone)
Fax: 020 7211 0228
E-mail: amateurcb@ra.gsi.gov.uk