

Can you confirm that we can have a single renewal date for all of our existing fixed link licences and also for all new link licences as we have at present? We would want to maintain the single renewal date with one single invoice for all of our links. Assuming that this is possible, do we have to request that our new (or amended) licences have the same renewal date as existing licenses at the time of application or will this be done as default? We want to avoid having odd link licenses that need separate licence payments.

The Renewal date will remain the same for existing customers and be the only renewal date they have, unless they have traded licences (Which can be harmonised) – A customer can have additional renewal dates, if they wish to pay for their links up front at any point in the year. There will also be one renewal notice comprising of their licences for billing. On application for licences, the customer will need to indicate which (if more than one) Renewal date they wish their licence(s) to go on.

For those stakeholders who use the current batch process, will the present batch application format be changed in any way? If any changes are planned then stakeholders will need to have sufficient notice to change their systems.

The first release of the new licensing/assignment system should not impact upon customers. Therefore no changes are proposed at this stage to the batch structure or format. When the new licensing/assignment system has 'settled in', Ofcom then intends to restructure and format the batch application process in a number of ways. This will result in operational benefits for customers. It is important that the batch process is brought in line with the current policy and it is necessary to take out the data fields which are no longer processed by Ofcom. Another key change will be making the batch process more flexible by allowing multiple frequency band applications to be made in a single batch application.

Customers will be issued with a new licence number for each link. Ofcom will send customers a licence table. This will have your current link number in one column, and in the adjacent column, your new licence number. When we go live with the new licensing structure, the new licence numbers must be used.

Will it still be possible to request an Excel listing of our link technical details on demand as we do at present as this is a useful facility for us?

Yes

Will there be any changes to the licence change and cancellation procedure and rules including use of the batch process for this?

Ofcom is intending to replace the current fixed link application form with separate ones for new applications, variation and surrender. Customers using the batch process can continue to do so (as per the answer to question2). Customers will be asked to use their new licence numbers.

Will there be any changes to the equipment and antenna reference codes?

Initially all equipment and antenna reference codes will be in the usual format as currently submitted in batch applications. Later, when the batch is revised, then the position will be reviewed.

What will be the earliest date from which we can receive part-credits for links cancelled part-way through its payment period?

Credit for pre-notified surrendered/cancelled links will not be implemented until the new IS system, to provide the licensing/assignments processes has been delivered. This is expected to be in the latter part of 2007.

Every year Ofcom sends us an 'Intention to Revoke' letter for non payment of licence fees but there is just not enough lead time between receiving the bill and the date the payment is due to verify our records, request any changes and organise payment. What can be done to improve the process?

It is a condition of the licence that renewal fees are paid on or before the renewal date. To aid prompt payment Ofcom will, in future, issue a validation notice 3 months before a licence renewal date for all licensees, regardless of whether they have one licence or multiple licences. For those customers who have multiple licences a single validation notice will issued with an attached schedule of licences held. The validation notice will show administrative and technical details of the licence held on our records, including the billing address. The licensee will have an opportunity to verify that the records are correct and request any changes. Ofcom will then issue a request for payment one month before the renewal date and the licensee will be expected to make payment by the due date.