

USE OF AMATEUR RADIO OVERSEAS BY UK AMATEUR RADIO LICENSEES

International recognition of UK amateur radio licences

1. Ofcom is the communications and radio spectrum regulator for the UK. We were established by Act of Parliament in 2002. Our functions, duties and powers come from UK legislation. They are described on our website at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/about>. One of our functions is to authorise the use of the radio spectrum, including issuing licences to UK Radio Amateurs.
2. The UK Amateur Radio licences that we issue are valid indefinitely. This means that an individual licence does not bear an expiry date. It remains valid unless or until it is surrendered by the licensee or is revoked by us. This is described in Section 4 of the licence ('Variation and revocation'). UK Amateur Radio licences are issued from our computerised licensing system. They are therefore not individually signed. A sample of a UK Amateur Radio licence is available on our website at <http://licensing.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/spectrum/amateur-radio/guidance-for-licensees/samplelicence07.pdf>.
3. The UK is a member of CEPT, the European regional organisation dealing with postal and telecommunications issues. Reciprocal arrangements have been agreed among the members of CEPT (and some other countries), concerning licensed Radio Amateurs. These arrangements describe how a licensed Radio Amateur from one country is allowed to use his or her amateur radio equipment in another country under the authorisation of the licence issued by his or her home country.
4. So, for example, the arrangements can permit UK radio amateurs to use their amateur radio equipment in other countries that have agreed to apply the CEPT arrangements though this use will be under the authorisation of the UK Amateur Radio licence. This is referred to at the top of page 2 of the UK Amateur Radio licence document.
5. The arrangements are contained in a CEPT Recommendation, T/R 61-01. This is available at <http://www.erodocdb.dk/doks/filedownload.aspx?fileid=3819&fileurl=http://www.erodocdb.dk/Docs/doc98/official/pdf/TR6101.PDF>.
6. Some countries that are not members of CEPT have also agreed to apply Recommendation T/R 61-01. All of the countries that have agreed to apply Recommendation T/R 61-01 (whether or not they are members of CEPT) are listed on the CEPT website at http://www.erodocdb.dk/doks/implement_doc_adm.aspx?docid=1802.
7. The radio spectrum regulator for each CEPT member country is listed at <http://cept.org/cept/contact-cept/cept-administrations-websites> and individual contacts are listed at <http://cept.org/ecc/topics/satellite-regulatory-information/national-contact-points>.

Advice to UK licensed Radio Amateurs travelling overseas

8. The use of amateur radio apparatus in some countries overseas may be covered by CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01. This is available on the CEPT website at (<http://www.erodocdb.dk/doks/filedownload.aspx?fileid=3819&fileurl=http://www.erodocdb.dk/Docs/doc98/official/pdf/TR6101.PDF>). This Recommendation makes provision for amateurs to operate for a short period in other participating countries without the need for an individual authorisation from the host country. Amateurs wishing to operate under T/R 61-01 must therefore read the Recommendation and ensure that they understand the limitations that it imposes. It is also the responsibility of individual UK Radio Amateurs to ensure that they understand any national rules that apply to operating amateur radio in the country that they are visiting as these may differ from those that apply in the UK.

9. Although the use of amateur radio in another country may be provided for by T/R 61-01, local police or other authorities overseas may not be familiar with these provisions. Showing a UK Amateur Radio licence and a copy of T/R 61-01 may not mean anything to them. Equally, in some countries (or regions or countries), the sight of an individual - particularly a foreigner - using radio apparatus may arouse suspicions.

10. There have been cases of local police overseas apprehending UK licensed Radio Amateurs, because the authorities were unfamiliar with Recommendation T/R 61-01 and because the UK Amateur Radio licence did not appear as they expected a licence to look. The guidance, above, about Recommendation T/R 61-01 may be helpful to overseas authorities if they are uncertain about UK licences but it is up to individual licensed Radio Amateurs to exercise judgement. It is not the place of the UK spectrum regulator to tell overseas authorities how to run their affairs.

11. Before UK licensed Radio Amateurs take any radio equipment overseas or decide to use amateur radio overseas under T/R 61-01, they should check the current advice being given by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country>) about their country of destination, to see if there are any particular sensitivities nationally or locally.

12. If in doubt, individuals may decide that is advisable not to operate radio equipment overseas if it could appear suspicious.