

Reference: 633562

Jerin John
Information Rights Adviser
Information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

28 November 2018

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about amateur radio call signs.

This was received by Ofcom on 31 October and it has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

You asked:

1. *Please provide me with a list of ALL amateur radio call signs that OFCOM has a database entry for and their current status such as Available, Allocated, Reserved, Historic, etc, what type of licence they have been allocated to, how long they are reserved for, when they were allocated etc. Please provide the status information that you use rather than trying to fit my examples.*

I understand that with the UK's allocation of 3 single character prefixes and various two-character prefixes (for overseas territories) there are potentially a huge number of call signs. I assume that you don't keep entries for each possible callsign but just the ones that you have specifically allocated, reserved etc and those that are currently available. This is the list I am requesting.

I note that the information commissioner does not consider searching a database as creating new information.

Please find in the attached annex a list of the amateur radio call signs that are currently in use, together with their relevant status, as to whether they are ‘allocated’, ‘reserved’ or ‘available’. To further clarify this categorisation:

- ‘Allocated’ means that the call sign is currently assigned to a station under an amateur radio licence. It is therefore not currently available for assignment to anyone else.
- ‘Reserved’ means that the call sign has been used within the past two years, although it is no longer, and is in the process of ‘cooling down’. It is therefore not currently available for assignment to anyone else, but operators will be able to apply for it again after the two-year period has expired.
- ‘Available’ means that an amateur radio operator may apply for it, as it:
 - is not currently assigned to an amateur radio station;

- is not cooling down (and has not, therefore been on issue to a station within the past two years);
- is not forbidden, for example, because it is considered offensive or harmful; and
- is in the correct format for the class of station to which it is to be assigned.

In terms of identifying the particular type of licence to which each call sign has been granted, you may find paragraph 1.11 of our published Guidance helpful, where we set out that:

1.11 The call signs that Ofcom issues for normal operation under the Amateur Radio Licence are made up of an initial character 'G', 'M' or '2' (denoting that a station is authorised by the UK), followed by a number and then, normally, three letters. Very old call signs, some of which remain in use, have only two trailing letters. The call sign that we issue shows the level of the station, as set out in the table below.

Call sign initial characters	Station level
Currently issuing: M7 Formerly issued: M3, M6	Foundation
Currently issuing: 2#0 Formerly issued: 2#1	Intermediate
Currently issuing: M0 Formerly issued: M1, M5, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G0	Full (all types)

You can find a copy of our published Guidance here:

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/82637/amateur_radio_licence_guidance_for_licensees.pdf.

2. Can you confirm if M5 callsigns are now available for general release?

M5 call signs are available if requested by someone applying for a new licence, as follows.

When applying for a new Amateur Radio licence, an applicant may elect for Ofcom's licensing system to choose a call sign for them. In that case, the system will assign a call sign that starts with 'M7', for a Foundation licence, '2#0' for an Intermediate Licence and 'M0' for a Full Licence. However, an applicant may request any available call sign that is in the correct format for the class of licence applied for. For a Full Licence, therefore, this could be a call sign with the prefix 'M5'. As set out above, we have listed the valid formats for the various classes of licences in paragraph 1.11 of our published Guidance.

You can find a list of the call sign formats that are currently being issued on our website here, <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/manage-your-licence/radiocommunication-licences/amateur-radio/amateur-radio-info>, under the drop-down menu “Amateur radio callsign allocation”.

I hope this information is useful. If you have any queries, please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Jerin John

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service you have received in relation to your request from Ofcom, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be treated as a formal complaint and will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will acknowledge the complaint and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for undertaking internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact:

Corporation Secretary
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HA

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF