
Breaking News - Proposed Changes In ZL Amateur Radio Licensing

30 March 2000

Mr Fred Johnson, AK 43
NZART Administration Liaison Officer
15 Field Street,
UPPER HUTT

Dear Fred

New Arrangements for Amateur Radio Licensing

As you know, the Radiocommunications Amendment Bill is presently before the House. It will still be some time though, before any new Radio Regulations are in place to make possible any changes to the regulatory provisions for amateur radio in New Zealand.

In anticipation of that mechanism, the Ministry has given consideration to new Amateur qualification and licensing provisions, having regard to NZART proposals, changes overseas and to current trends. The Ministry sees the following changes as desirable to promote and to encourage the further development of Amateur Radio in New Zealand:

Three levels of amateur radio operator qualification and radio licence to be retained, with Novice and Limited grades renamed to Entry and Technician to better reflect their purpose. Callsigns to no longer be grouped to indicate licence grade or need to be changed with change of grade.

A pass at the present Novice level in the new combined Regulations and Theory Examination to give immediate access to the present Novice band above 30 MHz (i.e. 144 to 148 MHz) at existing power levels. Access to be extended to all the current Novice bands below 30 MHz when credited with a Morse test pass at 5 words-per-minute. As at present, a pass at the present Limited/General level in the new combined Regulations and Theory Examination to give immediate access to all the amateur bands above 30 MHz with full amateur radio privileges. Access to be extended to all the current amateur bands below 30 MHz with full privileges when credited with a Morse test pass at 5 words-per-minute. A Morse test pass obtained at Novice level to be a credit.

The present 12 words-per-minute Morse test to be retained meantime and to be voluntary for reciprocal licensing purposes if required.

No change is proposed to the power limits for radio amateurs. These are to remain as at present for the three grades of licence.

As you will appreciate, these are generalised interim proposals and the detail must be further defined. So this summary is indicative only of the Ministry's present considerations. These proposals are not firm and may of course change with input from the public discussion process in the coming months before legislative change is possible. I regret that it is not yet possible to be more specific as to the time when licensing changes can be confirmed and enabled in the legislation.

Meantime, it would be appreciated if you could advise the New Zealand amateur radio community of this position.

Yours sincerely

Chris Brennan
Regional Manager, Auckland
Radio Spectrum Management Group
Ministry of Economic Development

New Directions in Amateur Radio Licensing in New Zealand

This is a summary of essential points from the report by Fred Johnson MNZM ZL2AMJ, NZART Administration Liaison Officer, given at the NZART Conference, Blenheim, 5 June 2004.

There has been a complete review of the conditions for the Amateur Radio Licence in New Zealand, the most thorough review ever. It commenced with a letter on 18 July 2003 from NZART to the Ministry of Economic Development, Radio Spectrum Management group (RSM), asking for the many successful outcomes for the Amateur Service from the World Radiocommunications Conference 2003 to be implemented in New Zealand. Your NZART ALO has been working with RSM to develop these new requirements. NZART Council has been kept apprised of the developments.

This is to advise you of the coming changes - but we all have to wait until the Ministry makes the official announcements.

The Ministry is changing its licensing software system to SMART (Spectrum Management and Registration Technology) and this system is expected to come on-stream in about 18 months. Some changes may have to wait for this new system to be operating as explained in the following notes.

The changes start on 17 June when a new revised Schedule 3 attached to our licence comes into effect. Other changes will take effect over the next 18 months or more. The news is all good. Many long-standing problems are being eliminated. Some of the changes are believed to be world firsts.

As a licensed radio amateur, what changes can I expect?

All present radio amateurs may soon receive a letter from the Ministry explaining the full regulatory details and other release information. The following points give background to some of these matters.

1. A callsign must be transmitted at least once every 15 minutes during communications.
2. The permitted maximum transmitter power output for an amateur station is quoted with one figure: 500 watt PEP. This is defined in the ITU RR 1.157 (see Appendix following). With only one figure, it is now mode-independent.
3. Third-party traffic, which since 1988 has been permitted nationally within New Zealand, is now permitted internationally with any country. But beware: the station you work in another country may not be permitted to handle such traffic with you. Other countries have rigid country-to-country agreements for third-party traffic by radio amateurs. New Zealand is not a party to any such agreement. This is not New Zealand's problem, the other countries will have to change their rules to permit such traffic with you. NZART's "Guidelines for Third-Party Traffic" has been revised - a copy is available from your local Councillor or from NZART HQ.
4. Licensed overseas visitors, i.e. persons holding a current amateur certificate of competency, authorisation, or licence issued by another administration, may operate an amateur station in New Zealand under a General User Radio Licence (GURL) with similar privileges to a ZL resident station for a period not exceeding 90 days, provided the certificate, authorisation or licence meets the requirements of Recommendation ITU-R M.1544, or CEPT T/R 61-01, or CEPT T/R 61-02, and is produced at the request of the Chief Executive.
5. The present country-to-country reciprocal licence agreements will disappear in time as more countries directly recognise the licences issued by other administrations. Cross-border travel by radio amateurs will become easier.

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6. The callsign to be used by a visitor from overseas will be the home-country callsign as allocated by the other administration with an added prefix "ZL" or an added suffix "ZL" which is to be separated from the national callsign by the character "/" (telegraphy), or the word "stroke" (telephony).
 7. Encoded transmissions by radio amateurs remain prohibited but are now permitted for the licensees of remotely operated stations, for example repeater and beacon trustees and for satellite control.
 8. The present unwanted emission limit figure for amateur stations -56dbW is being discarded. The ETSI standard ETS 300 684 is being adopted to apply to any emissions falling outside amateur bands. Although this ETS is written for commercial amateur equipment, the requirement "apply to emissions outside amateur bands" gives support to amateur's experiments and home-constructed equipment. The established official view continues: "what amateurs do within their own bands is their own problem and for them to fix".
 9. Licensees are now encouraged to prepare for, and to meet, the communication needs of national and international disaster relief. In New Zealand this has been an agreed and understood arrangement for decades but any written authorisation seems to have been lost in history. This international provision is now reflected in the new licence schedule.
 10. To demonstrate competency in the Morse code is no longer a requirement for an amateur radio licence. There is no mention of Morse code in the new licensing provisions.
 11. Morse testing by NZART will continue, voluntary for persons who wish to take a test for challenge purposes. NZART's Examinations Division could issue speed-achievement certificates. Some overseas countries are retaining a mandatory Morse requirement so a testing facility will be required for some overseas travellers for reciprocal-licensing purposes.
 12. There is only one grade of amateur operator licence in New Zealand, the General Amateur Licence. The word "General" must continue meantime because it is hard-entered in the Ministry's existing database. This may change with the new SMART system expected in 2005 but is undecided.
 13. All existing Limited Amateur licensees will automatically become General Amateur licensees on 17 June 2004 irrespective of what is written on their existing licences.
 14. The very few present legacy Novice licensees and their separate conditions will continue and will be manually processed outside the database by the Ministry until extinction. No new Novice licences are possible. Novice Licensees require a pass in the examination to attain General grade and are encouraged to do so.
 15. Existing Limited and Novice callsigns will be retained.
 16. A change of callsign can be requested following the existing rules. There being only one licence grade, licences will no longer indicate a grade.
 17. All amateur bands remain the same but the LF band is being listed for the first time as an allocated amateur band and is extended from 130 to 190 kHz.
 18. The band 7.1 to 7.2 MHz is to become amateur exclusive world-wide in 2009 - but that's a future excitement.
- How does a person get an Amateur Radio licence in New Zealand?
19. There continues to be only one amateur radio examination, computer-generated, administered by NZART. The 600-question question-bank is being revised for the new conditions. New exam-generating software will soon be available for exam supervisors. Exams conducted after 17 June should be for the new conditions.
 20. The present generally-established entry route into amateur radio is to pass the one examination and then spend some time on the VHF bands gaining operating experience.

The future entry path into amateur radio continues this pattern. A pass in the examination is followed by access to several HF bands and to VHF for a 3-month period to gain practical operating experience and with at least 50 contacts logged. Then access is permitted to all amateur bands. This requirement is only for new amateurs licensed after 17 June 2004.

What other documents are being amended?

21. A special access arrangement to the band 50 to 51 MHz was developed in 1990. The wording is being updated and it will be republished. No change to the philosophy is expected.

22. The Ministry's internal document about the format etc. of amateur callsigns is being revised. Amateur callsigns may now have up to four characters in the suffix with more than four characters for short-term special event stations. These changes may have to wait until the SMART system is in operation.

Where does NZART fit into all this? Licensing administration changes:

23. Applications for licences for amateur beacons, repeaters and fixed links in designated amateur bands will be subject to "engineering certification" from 1 October 2004. The procedures and arrangements are still being worked out, however this will likely entail one or more FMTAG members applying for Approved Radio Engineer status.

24. The maximum power output for amateur repeaters and beacons, being in designated amateur bands, will also be documented as 500 watt PEP. The definition ITU RR 1.157 refers (see Appendix).

25. A review of all fees is currently being undertaken by RSM. Further information on this matter, including the question of the amateur operator annual fee, is expected shortly.

26. Under SMART, the Amateur Operator Licence record entries in the Ministry's database, including certificates of competency and amateur callsigns, will be directly managed on-line by an "MED Approved Examiner". More work is to be done on this arrangement but the NZART Examinations Co-ordinator may be the person.

27. It is likely that there will be no Ministry fee when an "Approved Examiner" adds or makes changes to the operator licence entries on the Ministry's database. A once-only fee for a new operator licence entry or for a Certificate of Competency may be decided upon and could be collected and retained by approved examiners. More work is being done on this too. NZART Council will further consider this issue.

28. Any follow-up enforcement required for non-compliance with, or breaching of, any licence condition is a clear Ministry function. There is no question about this - it is a statutory function. The Ministry has compliance auditing and enforcement arrangements in place, active and being strengthened.

29. Under SMART, certificates can be printed off by the "Approved Examiner" as required, probably for a nominal fee. This could be in a variety of forms and made more suitable for hanging on the shack wall. This should be an encouragement for youngsters to become qualified.

30. In the longer term, when the SMART system is working, the amateur licence itself may disappear and a GURL ("General User Radio Licence") introduced for New Zealand amateur radio stations. The callsign allocated for the operator will then appear on the certificate itself.

Finally

These changes are being introduced over a lengthy period. It is suggested that remits for further changes or tinkering be held off for several years until the new system settles down and is properly studied and understood.

With one examination, with only one licence grade, and with new and simplified procedures, New Zealand amateur radio is positioned for an exciting future. We are very fortunate to have a supportive and understanding administration. Thanks are extended to the staff of the Ministry for their enlightened and fresh approach to licensing.

Appendix

Extract from The ITU International Radio Regulations

The average power of a radio transmitter, supplied to the antenna transmission line by a transmitter during one radio frequency cycle at the crest of the modulation envelope, taken under normal operating conditions, is multiplied by 1.157 to get the peak envelope power.

Breaking News - Changes In The Amateur Examinations

NZART Council is pleased to advise that the Amateur Operator's theory exam, to be held on 4th September will be the end of an era.

In 1990, NZART was one of the first amateur associations in the world to take over the operation of the theory examination. This resulted in a clamp on the trend to increased charges for this service from the administrators, and, of more effect, an immediate change to operating the exam during the weekend (on Saturdays), allowing candidates to sit without having to find time off during their business day. And results then arrived back to the candidate in a more sensible time. It has continued for 9 years, as the result of the hard efforts of a nation-wide team of volunteer examiners.

We are now poised to take the next leap forward for improved entry into amateur radio - examinations held when the candidate needs them, with instant results.

For a lengthy period, our executive has been working on a project to revolutionise the way our exam is structured, and I am very pleased to announce that we have received the long-awaited formal approval from the Ministry of Commerce to implement a new system.

The new examination system will be fully explained in future issues of Break In, but the basic details are, that a large public-domain database of questions has been established, and, coupled with special software, a full, unique examination can be produced and printed out for a candidate at any time with ease. The software will shortly be available from our web site, plus at a small charge to cover costs from National HQ and some Branch Secretaries. Those interested in joining our ranks, when armed with this software, can produce any number of sample papers at will, then check their answers either at home, or at a branch-run class.

The present system of branch-based Examiners will be continued, and candidates simply make an appointment that suits them and the examiner, either by themselves or in groups. On the day, two accredited examiners print out a specially validated version of the examination, and the candidate answers on the paper. The software produces an answer sheet immediately, so the examiners can advise the candidate their result on the spot. Successful candidates will then receive a printed, formal result sheet, which they can take to the nearest Ministry of Commerce office, and receive their license and callsign immediately or the next working day.

The system is tailored for ease of home self-examination, and then, flexible examination dates, with instant results. We are sure this will significantly reduce the hurdle into our hobby experienced by many.

Council will now appoint an examinations co-ordinator in the next 2 weeks. Members will have noted the advertisement for this position in the last issue of Break In. The new Officer will then be tasked with establishing the required network of examiners throughout the country, of course, starting with those who have been handling this task on the old system. We anticipate many will be pleased to step into the new, but similar role, but that we may need to recruit some additional assistance in some areas. If you are interested in working

with this new exciting system, contact your Branch Secretary, as our approach for volunteers will be carried out through their positions.

The new system is the result of some long and extended work by a number of hard-working volunteers. It is always risky to name specific people with a project as detailed and wide-spread as this, as some may be missed, but I do wish to acknowledge the works of a few. Our thanks go to Joe, ZL2AH, Fred ZL2AMJ, Ted ZL2IP, Gary ZL1AN and Jim ZL2BHF for their special input.

The examination next weekend will be the last on the old, twice per year system, and it is hoped the new, "on appointment" system will be up and running by January next year.

More information will be provide as the system is put together.

Alan Wallace, ZL1AMW Presdident, NZART

Read about the new system and review the new question bank

New Licensing arrangements for New Zealand Radio Amateurs

Changes to Amateur Licensing and the Amateur Operator Certificates of Competency result from the introduction of the Radiocommunications Regulations 2001.

There are now only two classes of Amateur Licence: *Limited* and *General*. The Novice and the Novice/Limited licences have been removed.

The Limited licensing procedure is unchanged. The General class is only changed by the lowering of the Morse test requirement to 5 words-per-minute.

Novice and Novice/Limited licences will no longer be granted. Existing licences in these categories will remain valid under the new Regulations and with their original licence provisions.

The Ministry encourages existing Novice and Novice/Limited licensees to review their qualifications to see if they now meet the requirements of the General Amateur Operator's Certificate of Competency.

If you have passed the Novice grade Morse test (6wpm) and attained a pass of 50% or more in the examination Sections A and B, or 66% or more in the combined sections A and B multiple-choice computer-generated examination, then you meet the requirement for a General Amateur Operators Certificate of Competency. You can immediately submit an application for an upgrade to a General licence.

The Ministry encourages all other licensees to study to gain a pass in the theory and/or Morse to meet the requirements of the General Amateur Operator's Certificate of Competency. Limited licence holders can upgrade to a General licence by passing a Morse test at 5 wpm.

The existing callsign grouping that indicates the class of licence of the holder will remain in force. This will require all licensees upgrading to a General licence to obtain a new callsign.

The Radiocommunications Regulations 2001 Section 28 (2) provides at the Chief Executive's discretion for variation to the manner in which an examination is carried out. If there is need to vary the examination process for a candidate with a particular disability, the examiners should approach RSM with a recommendation for variation to the process and obtain approval for that variation before the examination takes place. The Ministry will deal with each case as it arises. The candidate may be required to provide medical certificates.

The Ministry is working on a project to provide public access to the Radio Spectrum Licence Database on the internet. The bulk release of amateur radio licence and callsign information for publication in the NZART Annual CallBook is still to be arranged.

It is expected that NZART Morse Examiners will test at 12wpm on request for those who may have a requirement to meet this higher operating standard for overseas travel.

Important Changes

These regulatory changes mean consequential changes to the *New Zealand Amateur Radio Examination Question-Bank*. The Question-Bank has been revised and is available in various forms at the NZART website.

The new Question-Bank has been incorporated into *new Examination software*. Examiners are asked to download the new software and to use it for examination paper generation. Please delete the old software, it is no longer relevant. This software can be used by anyone for producing practice exercises.

The *Study Guide* has been revised and is available on-line and for downloading by anyone at the NZART website. It contains the complete Question-Bank with some example Test Papers to use as trial exams.

A new software package for *Morse training* has been developed by Gary Bold ZL1AN and can be downloaded too.

For further information or clarification on licensing matters, please contact your local office of the Ministry of Economic Development, Radio Spectrum Management.

Amendment to the Radio Regulations - Update 12/4/04

The Ministry of Economic Development, Radio Spectrum Management Group, has placed a notice dated 8 April on their Web Site.

Amendment to the Radio Regulations - Update 25/11/03

The Ministry of Economic Development, Radio Spectrum Management Group, has received legal advice and advises that their proposed amendments to the Radiocommunications Regulations are within the scope of the Act and the requisite papers have been prepared for submission to the Minister and Cabinet. Assuming these are approved it can be expected that Parliamentary Counsel Office can start drafting the necessary regulatory text. Following drafting and approval by the Cabinet Legislation Committee, and Cabinet, the amendments will be implemented by Order-In-Council. There is requirement that regulations must sit for 28 days before they come into force. So the time for coming into force is still not determined.

Changes to the New Zealand Radio Regulations are coming!

The recent World Radiocommunications Conference 2003 (9 June to 4 July 2003), revised and changed the International Radio Regulations concerning the Amateur Service. The outcomes are in accord with the changes sought by IARU and NZART. Negotiations are underway to implement them for New Zealand's radio amateurs.

Several sequential steps are involved:

The New Zealand Radio Regulations must first be updated. This is at government level under the guidance of the Ministry of Economic Development.

The Examination Question-bank for the Amateur Radio Examination must be revised.

The training material for candidates to study when preparing to sit the examination must be revised to recognise the new examination changes.

All this takes time!

So it must be appreciated that some material appearing on this NZART Web Page will of necessity become out-of-date while these revisions are taking place. The updated material will be made available as soon as possible.

A statement about implementation appears on the MED's web site at:

<http://www.med.govt.nz/rsm/int/wrc/wrc-2003-outcomes/index.html>

Please note that a firm date for regulatory change cannot yet be given and that you are invited to provide input if you wish but no closing date for input is given.

This Notice is dated 15 August 2003 and it will be updated as progress continues. Thank you for your understanding