

## 2013 Band Plans

At one point we thought 2012 may have had relatively few changes to the band plans (to fix a few omissions or typos) but it has proven not to be the case. The 2013 edition incorporates not only the new 472kHz band but we have taken the unusual step of including 5MHz. It also includes previous mid-year changes to 144MHz and new notes to 2.3 and 3.4GHz regarding 'spectrum release' as indicated in the January *RadCom*.

Band plans are living entities and do evolve over time. There are plenty of cases (not helped by search engines) where outdated ones may be found all too easily on the web. Therefore a plea to all is that if you have, or are aware, of older band plans on a website, please endeavour to remove them. It is far better to just have a web link to the RSGB website for where the latest ones can be found (but do not link too specifically to a file name).

**LF, MF AND HF BANDS.** It's not often that a new band appears in the band plans, but this year there are two!

**472 – 479kHz:** The new 600 metre band, allocated to the Amateur Service on a Secondary basis at WRC-2012 but not hitherto released, is now available to UK amateurs holding Full licences with a Notice of Variation. Activity is limited to modes with 500Hz bandwidth or less.

**5MHz:** Although access to 5MHz in the UK is approaching its 10th anniversary, this is the first time 5MHz has appeared in the band plan. From the beginning of 2013 there

is over 70kHz of spectrum available in 11 individual band segments of varying width and, whilst a contiguous band would have been desirable, the Primary User was unable to offer this level of access. However, the new allocation does include all the previous spot frequencies. Access to these frequencies is still only available to Amateur (Full) Licence holders who must obtain a NoV. No specific band plan has been mandated for these frequencies; as a guideline, users should be aware there are experimental beacons on 5290kHz and that upper sideband (USB) is preferred for SSB operation. AM operation is also now permitted with a maximum bandwidth of 6kHz, but obviously not in the segments of band less than 6kHz wide. Operators should also note that many other countries only have access to spot frequencies at 5MHz, which may need to be considered when selecting a suitable frequency.

**7MHz:** Although most digital mode activity has now moved to frequencies above 7040kHz as per the 2009 band plan, there is still some occasional activity below this frequency. In particular operators are reminded that PSK31 activity should start at 7040kHz and not below.

**VHF/MICROWAVE CHANGES. 144MHz:** During 2012, the 2m band plan was updated to clarify FM/DV calling frequencies and to incorporate the restructuring of AX.25 and Internet Gateways following a Litmus Test. The 2013 edition incorporates those and two further small changes. The latter clarify the

144.600MHz RTTY frequency, and indicate the withdrawal of 145.2125MHz Gateways (to protect 145.200MHz ISS uplinks).

**DATV:** The progress in spectrum-friendly digital ATV is reflected with new footnotes at 437MHz and the 23cm band for the maximum recommended QPSK symbol rates (that effectively set their occupied bandwidth).

**SPECTRUM RELEASE.** As described in the January Edition of *RadCom*, the 2.3 and 3.4GHz bands are subject to forthcoming changes, as the Primary User plans to release spectrum to the market. Additional notes and highlighting have been added for this.

**BAND PLAN NOTES.** Several updates have been made. Some are cosmetic or relate to the changes above. Others clarify AM operation, spectrum release and the migration to CTCSS-only access for FM Repeaters and Gateways.

**NEXT STEPS.** We are also considering changes to the online versions including better compatibility with tablets etc (derived from the Excel master). It is also possible that the 2013 IARU Vienna Interim meeting in April may consider some additional changes. In either case *RadCom* will bring you the news – and if you are unsure, by all means contact the Spectrum Forum via e-mail to [spectrum.chairman@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:spectrum.chairman@rsgb.org.uk).

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