



# Novice Licence Information Sheet

---

## Introduction

The Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence was introduced with the aim of encouraging people of all ages, but particularly young people, to take up amateur radio. Ministers recognise the value of amateur radio as a training ground for careers in radio and electronics and as a rewarding pursuit in itself. They hope that the Novice Licence will encourage many more people to get involved in radio for themselves.

This information sheet explains what is involved in being a novice licensee, how the novice licensing system works and how it fits in with the full amateur radio licensing system.

## Do I need a licence?

By law you must obtain a licence from the Radiocommunications Agency before you may legally send messages by radio. The licence sets out the conditions that apply, for example that you may need certain qualifications.

## What types of Novice Licence are available?

There are two types of Novice Licence, the Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence Class (A) and the Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence Class (B).

Class A Novices can use all the amateur frequency bands allocated to novices, including some bands below 30 MHz. Class B Novices have access to all the frequencies allocated to novices above 30 MHz. From 21 June 1999 both types of licence allow a maximum DC transmitter input power of 12 dBW or 10 dBW RF output from the transmitter.

## What will the Novice Licence enable me to do?

Amateur Radio has been allocated a large number of frequency bands enabling amateurs to communicate with each other, both locally and worldwide using a variety of techniques. Novice licensees have been given small segments of the major bands, allowing them to experience almost all aspects of amateur radio at first hand - though as beginners they will work with fairly low powers. Novices are likely to use mostly voice or Morse code, but the licence also allows them to send computer-to-computer messages, an increasingly popular aspect of amateur radio. Novices will gain an all round experience of amateur radio in practice.

Both Amateur (Novice) Licences allow the novice to use a wide variety of frequency bands. Those permitted under the Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence (B), where most novices will probably begin, will enable regular contacts in your local area and occasionally at longer range, possibly several hundred miles.

The Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence (A) gives access to additional frequency bands used particularly for long range communications. Novices using these bands will be able to make contacts with other countries, and perhaps other continents, very often using Morse code.

N.B. From 21 June 1999, novices have been given increased access to a number of bands including full access to the 2 metre amateur band.

## **What if I just want to listen to amateur radio?**

Many people gain a lot of enjoyment simply from listening to amateur radio transmissions. No licence is required for this, provided that the radio equipment you use is designed for reception only. If you do not wish to take the training course and exam, or are not yet sure how to proceed, a period of listening in to amateur transmissions can be a very useful introduction to the hobby.

## **What qualifications are required?**

To obtain the Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence (B), you must first successfully complete a practical training course (run by the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB)) and then pass the Novice Radio Amateur Examination (NRAE - subject number 773) conducted by the City and Guilds of London Institute.

To obtain the Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence (A), you require the above qualifications plus a pass in the Novice Morse Test (5 wpm), conducted by the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB). A pass in the 12 wpm RSGB Morse Code Test is also acceptable.

Existing full radio licensees can apply for a Novice licence if they wish. Full Class B licensees of at least one year's standing are eligible to become Class A Novice licensees, if they pass the 5 wpm Novice Morse Test. Such a licensee will hold both a Novice and a full Class B Licence, have both Novice and full Class B call signs and pay fees for both licences.

## **What does the training course consist of?**

The training course is run by the RSGB and is available at many locations throughout the UK. The aim of the course is to train novice licensees in the basic skills of amateur radio and make sure they are well prepared to "go on the air". The course covers the correct operation of an amateur radio station, basic radio theory, and practice in constructing your own equipment. It also covers the conditions of the novice licence, an introduction to Morse code and many practical aspects of amateur radio. Each course is likely to last for about 30 hours spread over 12 weeks, although some trainees are likely to need longer than this. Throughout the course trainees will be continuously assessed and will have to complete specific construction projects. Assessment will be of a general nature and a weakness in one or two areas will not adversely affect the overall assessment. There will be no final assessment at the end of the course.

## **How do I find out about the training course?**

Information about the training course can be obtained from the RSGB. Mark your envelope "Novice Training".

## **What does the Novice Radio Amateur Examination consist of?**

The Novice Radio Amateur Examination (NRAE) is conducted by the City and Guilds of London Institute. The examination will be held four times a year at centres located throughout the UK. The 75 minute examination comprises 45 multiple choice questions based on subjects covered in the training course. The Amateur Radio Novice Licence Schedule is provided for reference during the examination.

Information on the NRAE can be obtained from the City and Guilds of London Institute.

## **What does the Novice Morse Test consist of?**

The Novice Morse Test will require a candidate to demonstrate his or her skill in receiving and sending Morse code at 5 words per minute.

Information on the Morse Test can be obtained from the Radio Society of Great Britain.

## **Why do I need to know about Morse code?**

Morse code is a very efficient means of communications which enables low power transmitters to achieve good long distance contacts. Morse is also the universal language for amateurs and enables them to communicate even when they have no language in common. Even those who don't take the 5 wpm Morse test to qualify for the Amateur Radio (Novice) Licence (A), will find an introduction to Morse useful.

## **How much does the training course cost?**

Trainees may have to meet the cost of materials used, such as components for construction projects and worksheets and the travelling and "modest" incidental expenses incurred by the instructor.

## **What does it cost to take the NRAE?**

The City and Guilds' fee for the NRAE is £12.80. Individual examination centres may also make an administrative charge to candidates.

## **What is the fee for a Novice Licence?**

The Radiocommunications Agency's fee for both classes of Novice Licence is £15.00 per annum. However, for those under 21 years of age the licence is free.

All licencees will be sent a renewal reminder each year, six weeks before the licence expires. If you are still under 21 at the date of renewal, you will need only to indicate that you wish to continue to be registered as a novice licensee .

## **How much will it cost to operate as a novice?**

There is a very wide range of equipment available from moderately priced kits to very expensive radio transceivers. Novices are free to use any type of equipment provided they operate within their licence conditions. There are many sources of low cost equipment for novices - for example, construction kits designed specially for them and secondhand equipment available through clubs, press advertisements and amateur rallies. Training course instructors will be able to advise trainees on the best way to get equipment at reasonable cost. Local amateur clubs may also be able to help.

## **What call signs do novices use?**

Novice licensees have a separate series of call signs whose format is similar to that for full amateur radio licensees. Some examples are:

2E 0 ACG - Class A Novice in England

2W 3 CLA - Class A Novice in Wales

2M 1 RGO - Class B Novice in Scotland

Novice licensees' call signs are made up of the following elements:

2 / REGIONAL SECONDARY LOCATOR /CLASS / THREE LETTERS

Taking these in turn:

✈ the numeral 2 is the unique prefix for a UK novice licensee

✈ the "regional secondary locator" indicates the region of the UK from which the licensee is transmitting.

They are:

**E** England    **D** Isle of Man

**M** Scotland    **U** Guernsey

**I** Ireland    **J** Jersey

**W** Wales

These are the same as for full licensees with the exception of England for which no regional secondary locator is required.

✈ The class of licence (A or B) is indicated by a numeral. The numerals 0, 2, 3 and 4 denote Class A and 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8 denote Class B. These are the same as those used for full licensees.

✈ The three letters are issued in alphabetical series (AAA, AAB, AAC,.....ZZX, ZZY, ZZZ). Each three letter combination is unique to an individual licensee.

## Is anyone else covered by my licence?

No, a novice licensee may not supervise other radio operators. However, novice licencees may operate the station of a full licensee under his or her direct supervision, utilising the conditions of the full licence, and of course, using the full licensee's callsign.

## Where do I apply for my licence?

The Radio Licensing Centre, run by Post Office Customer Management, formerly Subscription Services Ltd, issue all amateur radio licences. All applications for licences should be made by post to the Radio Licensing Centre.

Application forms may be obtained from the same address.

 [Top](#)

---

## Contact points

For all enquiries i.e. licence renewals/general enquiries concerning individual licences or their issue:

Radio Licensing Centre  
Post Office Customer Management  
PO Box 885  
Bristol  
BS99 5LG  
Tel: 0117 925 8333  
Minicom: 0117 921 9550

In order to comply with the requirements of the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act (CPI) 1996, all telephone calls to the Radio Licensing Centre are recorded.

For all enquiries on the practical training course and Novice Morse Test:

"Novice Training"  
Radio Society of Great Britain  
Lambda House  
Cranborne Road  
Potters Bar  
Herts  
EN6 3JE  
Tel: 01707 659015

For enquiries on the NRAE (subject 773):  
City & Guilds of London Institute  
1 Giltspur Street  
London  
EC1A 9DD  
Tel: 020 7294 2468

For other enquiries on amateur radio:

Amateur Radio Services  
Radiocommunications Agency  
Wyndham House  
189 Marsh Wall  
London  
E14 9SX  
Tel: 020 7211 0159/0160  
Fax: 020 7211 0228  
(Answerphone): 020 7211 0161  
E-mail: [amcb@ra.gnet.gov.uk](mailto:amcb@ra.gnet.gov.uk)

Radiocommunications Agency  
Library & Information Service  
Wyndham House  
189 Marsh Wall  
London  
E14 9SX  
Tel: 020 7211 0502/0505  
Fax: 020 7211 0507  
e-mail: [library.ra@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:library.ra@gtnet.gov.uk)

We will be pleased to help you.

For further information about other radio matters please contact the Agency's 24 Hour Telephone Enquiry Service 020 7211 0211

## Further reading

Subject listing of RA Information Sheets and Application Forms

Order            **About the Agency**  
Ref. No.

- [RA 0](#) · Current List of Agency Publications (Rev. 17, May 2000)
- [RA 2](#) · Current List of Agency Publications (Rev. 17, May 2000)
- [RA 206](#) · Addresses of the RA Local District Offices (Rev. 13, May 2000)  
The Radiocommunications Agency and its Role in Managing

[RA 354](#) · the Radio Spectrum (Rev. 1, March 2000)

## Amateur Radio

- [BR 68](#) · Amateur Radio Licence (A) or (B). Terms, Provisions and Limitations Booklet BR 68 (Rev. 7, March 2000)
- [BR 68a/N](#) · Amateur Radio Novice Licence (A) or (B). Terms, Provisions and Limitations Booklet BR 68 a/N (Rev. 5, March 2000)
- [RA 165](#) · Novice Licence Application Form (Rev. 5, March 2000)
- [RA 188](#) · Amateur Radio Licence Application Form (Rev. 5, March 2000)
- [RA 189](#) · Application for a Temporary Licence for non-UK Residents (Rev. 3, March 2000)
- [RA 190](#) · How to become a Radio Amateur (Rev. 9, March 2000)
- [RA 234](#) · Electromagnetic Compatibility and the Radio Amateur (Rev. 5, March 2000)
- [RA 247](#) · Operation under CEPT (Rev. 4, June 1996)
- [RA 345](#) · Abuse of Amateur Radio (Rev. 2, March 2000)
- RA 356 · Application for Establishment of an Amateur Repeater Station (not available at time of going to press)

 [Top](#)