



Instructors' Newsletter

March 2010

Welcome back!

This is the second of the new series of newsletters. I hope the first one in its new format was well received.

First a thank you from the RCE Department at HQ. Most clubs had kindly responded to the moratorium and HQ was able to get other maintenance work done. One or two requests were received during the closed period and were put aside. It is hoped the delay did not affect their examinations.

There will be a similar moratorium from Monday 2 August until Friday 13 August 2010. Requests for papers should be received please by Friday 16th July for exams on any date in August. After that date papers will be held in order of receipt and processed in time for exams from Wednesday 1 September. Please remember Monday 30 August is a bank holiday and there will be no post that day.

Advanced Exam dates 2010

Wednesday 21 April at 18:30, Thursday 17 June at 18:30, Friday 6 August at 18:30, October TBA, Monday 22 November at 18:30. Any queries please contact Exams Department on 01234 832700 or e-mail rce.dept@rsgb.org.uk

The October exam will co-ordinate with the RSGB Convention.

All Three Exams Under One Roof

The ARDC will again be arranging to hold Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced examinations at the RSGB Convention scheduled for 8 to 10 October. Candidates are reminded to plan to complete the practical activities with a local assessor prior to the Convention. Further details will be published in due course.

Train the Trainers

There will be a TtT meeting 24 April in N London hosted by LEFARS and other dates have been requested. These events are demand led. If you would like to hold a TtT session in your area or at your club please contact Brian Reay G8OSN at g8osn@yahoo.co.uk. A calendar of events and available dates is at www.g8osn.org.uk. It will be helpful if you also contact your regional representative who can help with venues and alerting other clubs in the area.

ARDC

Yahoo Tutors' reflector

An email reflector has been set up as a Yahoo group. This is an informal network of tutors, originally those who have been on a Train the Trainers course but open to all tutors.

It is a useful way of sharing information, free places on courses, tutors advising of students looking for courses and tutor information generally. Access is via your browser to view a list of messages, a daily digest or individual e-mails as they are sent to the reflector. The browser is probably the better option and allows access to stored files as well.

You will need to log in to Yahoo and be invited to join the tutors' group. E-mail Brian Reay, the moderator, for an invitation, on g8osn@yahoo.co.uk

ARDC

Moratoria in 2011

The 2010 pattern of two 2-week breaks is likely to continue but are February and August appropriate? Remember the aim is to make time for in-house maintenance so producing or marking Advanced examination papers cannot be done then either. Simple answers please (no lengthy justifications) to rce.dept@rsgb.org.uk

RCE Dept.

Change in definition of “Centre” and premises registration.

To align with Ofqual terminology the “Examination Centre” is now the club or school, that is the corporate body. Each centre may have a number of premises where examinations are held. These will be designated by the centre number and an identifying letter. Eg KT001/A, KT001/B. This will not affect clubs in any way but they may see the registration number change as this procedure is implemented.

Two years ago the rules changed requiring all premises to be registered, not just Intermediate and Advanced. Existing premises used for Foundation exams may continue to be used by the club concerned and will eventually get inspected. New premises will need registration in the normal way. It is intended that this will be painless but it does take time as the visiting inspectors are volunteers too.

Connecting Transceivers in Vehicles

Change of Recommended Practice

Guidance for vehicle installation was originally contained in MPT1362 issued by the Radiocommunications Agency after consultation with industry. That role has now passed to the Federation of Communication Services and re-issued as the UK Code of Practice FCS1362.

www.fcs.org.uk/my%20files/fcs_pdfs/codesofpractice/08-05-12%20fcs%201362%20final.pdf.

There is a significant change in the guidance, section which will affect the Advanced examination and the Advanced course book.

The advice in MPT1362 and all copies of Advance! up to and including the 2009 reprint was to connect the transceiver directly to the vehicle battery with appropriate fuses in both the positive and negative leads. Often there is an incidental DC route from the vehicle chassis via the antenna mount, coaxial cable outer, rig and negative power lead to the battery terminal. Some vehicle load current will take that route and if the battery negative to chassis strap fails then all vehicle loads including starting current (100A plus) could. Clearly a fire risk especially for the super thin coax intended to fit round a door or boot seal.

New advice.

The new guidance is to connect the transceiver negative directly to the vehicle chassis and no fuse in the negative. (Assumes negative earth.) The positive lead should still be fused and connected to the battery or in accordance with the vehicle manufactures specific recommendation.

Remember that transceivers should be specified for vehicle use and the manufacturer's guidance on RF power limits, antenna placement and DC supplies must be followed. Failure to do so might affect your insurance cover and questions on this point must be directed to your insurance provider.

Effect on Examinations

Vehicle installations are covered in the Advanced specification, syllabus item 9c1. It is proposed to edit relevant questions shortly. Candidates may be asked questions to the new guidance from 1 September 2010 onwards. The old practice of a fused negative to the battery will not be used as a distracter, but from 1 September an unfused negative to the battery will be a legitimate wrong answer since that has always been wrong.

Comments and appeals on questions

Tutors and invigilators are welcome to comment on questions. Ideally this can be on the irregularity report, which enables speedy resolution. Alternatively a candidate may approach the tutor after the papers have been sealed especially since sealing must occur before the results are issued (Foundation and Intermediate). In that case an e-mail or letter to the RCE Department at RSGB Bedford is appropriate. The key requirement is a brief description of the problem and the question bank number (eg 2a1-002) shown on the LHS of the paper. Tutors may wish to mention that to the candidates.