

This information sheet provides details about Private Business Radio (PBR). A business radio system is used to pass messages between a base station and mobile sets and mobile to mobile as an aid to conducting business. The different Business Radio licences allow the licensee to operate different types of systems in accordance with licence conditions and Wireless Telegraphy legislation.

## Private Business Radio (PBR) Licence Requirements for 'Watch Schemes'

OfW75 (previously Radiocommunications Agency information sheet RA 324)

### 1. Introduction

This leaflet covers the licensing requirements that you must follow if you plan to establish a watch scheme involving the use of PBR.

### 2. What is a watch scheme?

Over recent years, increases in crime have led to the formation of various 'watch schemes', providing security for businesses and property as well as communications in the event of any incident. Typically, these schemes are set up by groups of individuals or other organisations with similar interests (e.g. a group of retailers forming a town-centre 'Shopwatch' scheme).

PBR is often used to provide the necessary communication between the members of a scheme. Any system using PBR must be licensed in accordance with the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006.

### 3. Licensing requirements

A PBR licence can be issued only to a legal entity (an individual, a partnership, a limited company or an incorporated association).

If your group does not have legal status – for example, if it was formed merely to provide the funding for a watch scheme – it cannot own a licence itself. In such a case, usually an individual member of the group will obtain a licence – but please note that the licence then 'belongs' to that person, who is responsible for complying with the licence terms. If that person leaves the group, another member will have to apply for a new licence.

### 4. Controlling the use of the system

**Only** the members of your group may use equipment that forms part of your PBR system.

The equipment must be under the licensee's control at all times. However, owing to the nature of watch schemes, the licensee will not usually be physically present at every site where the equipment is located and used. We therefore require you to show the method of control that you will adopt. This must be a contract (not a monetary agreement) between the licensee and the other group members. The contract must be signed by, or on behalf of, anyone wishing to use the system.

The contract must set out:

- the operational requirements of the equipment, in line with the licence terms and conditions; and
- the penalty that will be imposed if improper use occurs.

You must submit a copy of the intended contract to Ofcom (the Office of Communication) with your licence application.

If you have formed a company to provide a watch scheme, a single licence can be issued to the company itself, with additional schedules issued relating to the areas of operation. In this case, you must form a local management group (composed of local users of the system) that will take responsibility for overseeing the scheme's operation at a local level.

Your company will need to provide a named member of the local management group, whom we can contact if necessary. This person must be identified in the application for your licence or additional service; his/her details will then be shown on the licence schedule.

## 5. Notification of users

Because of the diverse nature of watch schemes, you must provide your local Ofcom office (see Section 8) with a list of the system's users. The licensee must keep this up to date and accurate, so that any interference problems can be resolved swiftly in the licensee's absence.

## 6. Watch schemes and the police

Some local police forces become involved with the operation of watch schemes; indeed, in some areas these schemes are managed by local police staff.

You are allowed to provide a number of mobile units forming part of the system to local police officers, or to the local closed-circuit TV control room, as long as you declare these units in the total number of units licensed for the watch scheme's use.

In some cases, a police force may consider installing a local watch scheme frequency into its equipment. Again, this is acceptable to us as long as the equipment concerned is declared on the watch scheme licence and meets the relevant current specification for PBR. However, the police force may need to seek guidance from Ofcom.

## 7. Providing frequencies and facilities

Because of the extensive use of some UHF frequencies in most built-up areas of the UK, it may be difficult for us to assign you a UHF frequency. We may have to make an assignment in an alternative band.

Also, there may be restraints that prevent us from permitting special facilities on your licence, such as 'talkthrough' (which allows each unit to talk directly to another through a base unit – see information leaflet OfW59 for details).

We recommend that you do not buy any equipment until we have issued you with a licence schedule, detailing the frequency and facilities we are prepared to licence.

## 8. Enquiries

If you have any enquiries about the licensing of watch schemes, please contact your local Ofcom office. Details are available on the Ofcom website [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk) or from the Ofcom Contact centre.

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