

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.

Local Authority Private Business Radio (PBR): Use by Independent Contractors

OfW76 (previously Radiocommunications Agency information sheet RA 191)

1. Introduction

It is common practice for local authorities to contract out services, and to give independent contractors access to their PBR systems. This leaflet aims to answer a number of questions concerning a contractor's use of a local authority's business radio system.

2. Can an independent contractor use a local authority's business radio system?

Yes. An independent contractor working on behalf of a local authority may use that local authority's business radio system, as long as all the systems involved are listed on the local authority's licence schedule. Under Clause 2(b) of the local authority's PBR licence, the contractor is authorised by the local authority to operate the system on its behalf.

The local authority is responsible for ensuring that the contractor can comply fully with the licence conditions in the use of such stations.

3. Can an independent contractor operate his/her own mobile radio stations to communicate with a local authority's business radio system?

Yes. A contractor may operate his/her own mobile stations, as long as they are listed in Part 2 of the local authority's licence schedule.

The local authority is responsible for ensuring that the contractor can comply fully with the conditions of the licence in the use of such stations.

4. Can an independent contractor install and operate control equipment from his premises to undertake local authority work?

Yes. However, the person who controls the use of the business radio system must be the licensee.

If the contractor's control equipment is only a remote control point for operating the base station of the local authority's system (either by a wire or radio link), and the contractor uses the radio system only for the local authority's business, the local authority must be the licensee. In this case, the local authority must apply for the additional control point to be listed on its licence schedule.

However, if a contractor establishes his/her own base station to carry out local authority business, s/he must apply for a licence in his/her own name. This will also enable the contractor to use that system for non-authority business (subject to the terms, provisions and limitations of the licence).

5. Can a sub-contractor use a local authority's business radio system?

Yes. As long as all the systems involved are listed on the local authority's licence schedule and the system is used only for local authority business, the sub-contractor is authorised by Clause 2(b) of the licence to operate stations on the local authority's behalf.

6. Who is responsible for ensuring that the licence requirements are met?

If the local authority is the licensee, it is responsible (under Clause 5 of its licence) to ensure that a contractor observes the terms, provisions and limitations of the licence – particularly the requirement that the stations should not cause undue interference to other co-channel users.

If a contractor is to use a local authority's business radio system, we advise the local authority to ensure that the contractor is aware of the relevant licence requirements, and that these requirements are written into any contracts.

7. Further information

For more information, please contact your regional Ofcom office. Contact details are available on the website www.ofcom.org.uk or from the Ofcom Contact Centre.

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