

# Radio Communications on Scout Activities – A Guide for Leaders



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## Introduction

This is the third edition of the factsheet which updates that coded FS120502 and dated May 1995. It is intended as a guide as to what is available, legal and useful to those wishing to use radio communication equipment on Scout Activities.

Further editions may be issued in the light of experience and changes in equipment availability. The production of future editions will be announced in SCOUTING Magazine, Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

## General

Radio communications are regulated by the Wireless Telegraphy Act to ensure that all are able to use radio beneficially. Chaos would ensue if these regulations were not enforced and the Department of Trade & Industry Radiocommunications Agency is the regulatory body in the UK. The Scout Association works closely with this agency to guide and regulate the responsible use of radio within The Association's membership.

## Private Mobile Radio

Is used by many organisations such as the breakdown services, Emergency Services and business users to communicate with vehicles and personnel.

The Association has a license to use certain of these Radio channels at activities and events. Only equipment approved to specific standards laid down by the Department of Trade & Industry Radiocommunications Agency can be used on these channels. The Association operates an agreement with the RA to license and regulate Scout users of PBR radio.

The Association has, on behalf of the RA, licensed a number of approved Scout

Communication Teams to provide communications services to the Scout and Guide movements as well as to youth and community organisations many of which do not have their own facilities. The services available from Scout Communications Teams are detailed in the companion leaflet FS120501 available from The Scout Information Centre.

The Association is, with the agreement of the appropriate Commissioner, also able to license Campsites as well as Counties, Districts and Groups who have the finance and expertise available to purchase, maintain and operate radio equipment to the required standards.

Further detailed information on the terms and conditions relating to the issuing of a private mobile radio sub-licence is contained in the companion leaflet FS120503 Using Radio Communications - A Guide to Those Wishing to Use Private Mobile Radio available from the Scout Information Centre.

## CB Radio

May be suitable for car parking and other non-safety applications. It is not though ideal for use on night hikes, camps or similar activities in view of the lack of privacy on the channels.

Equipment, both handportable, mobile and base with up to 80 channels available can be bought from a number of retail sources and must conform to the current British and European standards.

A licence is required and is obtainable from the Radio Licensing Centre, Subscription Services Limited, PO Box 855, Bristol BS99 5LF on completion of the application form and payment of the appropriate fee.

A set of CB information sheets, RA240 and 246 is available from The Radiocommunications Agency Library on 0171 215 2072 (24 hour answering service).

## The Scout Association

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### **Short Range Business Radio (SRBR)**

This has been available since early 1996 and was intended to promote low cost, two way communications for business users. A simple licencing procedure requires payment of a licence fee every 3 years after which the equipment can be used anywhere within the UK, except Northern Ireland. The radios are already programmed to the permitted frequencies. Users include hotels, garden centres and other outdoor event organisers.

The power level is restricted and the typical range is a few hundred metres. This equipment currently operates in the UHF band at around 461 Mhz. Harmonisation with Europe is expected to see the movement of all users to a new standard called PMR 446 (at 446 Mhz.) within the next few years. It is envisaged that this frequency will be licence exempt if approved equipment is used.

### **Marine VHF Radio**

Has become an increasingly common piece of equipment found on small boats. Many boat owners quite rightly consider VHF radio as an essential part of a vessel's distress and safety equipment.

A licence is required for the equipment. Further details are contained in RA145 Ship Radio Licence and Guidance Notes and RA148 Certificates of Competency, available from the Radiocommunications Agency on 0171-215 2072.

In addition to the equipment requiring a licence, a VHF marine radio can only be operated by, or under the supervision of a holder of a Certificate of Competence (VHF). Detailed information is obtainable from The Royal Yachting Association on 01703 629962:

Coastal radio stations are operated and maintained, through which telephone calls may be made to and from vessels equipped with marine VHF radio through which telephone calls may be made to and from vessels equipped with marine VHF radio.

### **Aeronautical Radio**

Information sheets RA21, 22 and 23 covering the use of radio on Gliders, Hang Gliders and Balloons are available from the Radiocommunications Agency Library on 0171-215 2072.

### **Amateur Radio**

There are many Radio Amateurs and Local Radio Societies or clubs who are more than willing to help with Scout activities. In the main, this would be in connection with events such as Jamboree-on-the-Air or other special event Amateur Radio Stations. An Amateur Radio Licence must be held by those operating the equipment. Scouts are able to talk on the air under special arrangements the details of which are available from The Radio Society of Great Britain, Lambda House, Cranborne Road, Potters Bar, EN6 3JE, and the Programme and Development Department at Gilwell Park.

Full information is contained in leaflets Jamboree-on-the-Air (FS120122) and Radio Stations at Scout Events (FS120123), available from The Information Centre at Gilwell Park.

Radio Amateurs may also be permitted under special regulations to assist with passing information at specified events. It is important that the regulations are specifically understood and adhered to by the radio amateur and the event organiser. As these regulations are subject to change, both parties should satisfy themselves that they are in possession of the latest information which is available from The Radio Society of Great Britain.

Amateur radio is well regulated and this system is more suitable than CB Radio for any messages of a more confidential nature, although it should be noted that other Amateurs, and listeners with suitable equipment, are able to monitor transmissions.

### **Walkie-Talkies and other Low Power Devices**

Certain Low Power devices such as very short range walkie-talkies and metal detectors, which have exemption, no longer require a licence.

Before purchasing any such items you should ensure that they are exempt from licensing. It is illegal to import, sell and operate items which do not meet DTI/CEPT regulations and which are either unlicensable in the UK or are not the subject of an exemption order. If in doubt the DTI Radiocommunications Agency will be pleased to advise you. Information sheets on Radio Microphones, Radio controlled Models and a Radio Users' Guide to the Law are obtainable

from the Radiocommunications Agency Library on 0207 215 2072.

### **Mobile Telephone**

Mobile telephones are widely available from both specialised and retail outlets. Older analogue networks and more modern digital networks are operated throughout the UK by several companies. It is likely that you will already have a couple of people attending your event who carry mobile telephones. If those are to be used on an event, then thought must be made to the cost of telephone calls incurred. Unlike radio, only one person will hear the call, so information is not easily disseminated.

It must also be considered that if the mobile telephone is someone's personal equipment, then the telephone is only available as long as they remain at the event.

Parties walking on the hills should NOT rely on mobile telephones as their sole means of communications. Radios and telephones are no substitute for good preparation, planning and training.

### **Publications Cross Reference**

The current editions of:

Communication Services - FS120501  
Using Radio Communications - FS120503  
Jamboree on the Air - FS120521  
Radio Stations at Scout Events - FS120522  
Royal Yachting Association - VHF Operators  
Exam - G26  
Royal Yachting Association - VHF Radio  
Telephony for Yachtsmen - G22  
Radiocommunications Agency - List of information  
documents - RA0