

The Operation of Amateur Radio Service in Hong Kong

1. General

1.1 The possession and use of radio apparatus in Hong Kong is subject to the provisions of the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) (the Ordinance). Under this Ordinance, radio amateurs wishing to possess and operate an amateur station must hold an Amateur Station Licence issued by the Telecommunications Authority (TA) and comply with the conditions therein. Pursuant to Section 8(1)(b) of the Ordinance, possession or use of any apparatus for radiocommunications without a valid licence shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable :

(a) on summary conviction, to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for 2 years; and

(b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine of \$100,000 and to imprisonment for 5 years.

1.2 An Amateur Station Licence is composed of a licence main body, general conditions and special conditions together with two schedules. Schedule 1 shows the authorized frequency bands, permitted classes of emissions and maximum power allowable. Schedule 2 shows details of the location(s) of station(s). Please refer to Annex B1 for a sample of the Amateur Station Licence.

2. Licence Application

2.1 As far as the licensee is concerned, Amateur Station Licence is grouped into the following categories:

(a) Amateur Station Licence

This licence is issued to an individual who meets the licensing criteria.

(b) Amateur Station Licence for Club

This licence is issued to a society, club, association, school, etc. (hereafter called the “club”), properly registered in Hong Kong. The operation of the amateur station by its members or students must be in the presence of and under the direct supervision of a holder of an Amateur Station Licence and/or Authority to Operate who, at the same time, must be one of the supervisors of the club. The licence is issued in the registered name of the society. The person(s) responsible for the society shall also be the person(s) responsible for ensuring all the licence conditions are complied with.

(c) Amateur Station Licence for Repeater Station

This licence is issued to the holder of an Amateur Station Licence for club for the establishment of a repeater station. Approval from the TA must first be obtained prior to the establishment of any repeater station.

2.2 Licensing criteria

(a) Amateur Station Licence

The applicant should possess one of the following documents:

- (i) Hong Kong Radio Amateur Certificate issued by the TA;
- (ii) Documentary evidence showing that applicant has passed a radio amateur examination conducted by a local organization recognized by the TA;
- (iii) Harmonised Amateur Radio Examination Certificate (HAREC) issued by an administration participating in the European Conference Postal and Telecommunications (CEPT) Recommendation T/R 61-02 together with documentary evidence showing that the applicant will stay in Hong Kong for a period longer than three months;
- (iv) Radio Amateur Examination (City & Guilds of London) Certificate; or
- (v) Amateur station licence issued by other administration and recognized by the TA as equivalent to the Amateur Station Licence of Hong Kong.

(b) Amateur Station Licence for Club

- (i) The club should be officially registered in Hong Kong; and
- (ii) the supervisor of the amateur station of the club should hold a valid Amateur Station Licence and/or an Authority to Operate (ATO).

(c) Amateur Station Licence for Repeater Station

- (i) The applicant should hold an Amateur Station Licence for club; and
- (ii) the applicant should submit a proposal to the TA detailing the location of the repeater station, the proposed operating frequencies, call sign and output power, the technical configuration of the repeater and other related information.

2.3 Application Procedure

(a) Guidelines for Application for Amateur Station Licence and the relevant application forms are available from the web site of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) (<http://www.ofta.gov.hk>) under “Industry Focus/Licensing/How to Apply/How to Apply (licences)”. The completed application form OFTA A201 or OFTA A202 together with the required documents could be submitted to OFTA by any of the methods as stated in the application form.

(b) Online Licensing is also available from OFTA's web site under “Industry Focus/Licensing/Online Licensing”. If the application is in order, the licence will normally be sent to the applicant by post.

2.4 Validity Period and Fee

- (a) An Amateur Station Licence is valid for one year from the date of issue and thereafter so long as the licensee pays to the TA in advance the renewal fee in each year on or before the anniversary date of the issue of the licence. A fee of \$150 shall be payable on the issue or renewal of the licence.

3. **Authority to Operate (ATO)**

- 3.1 An ATO is an authorization document in the form of a card issued to licensed amateurs, holders of recognized radio amateur certificate and/or amateur station licence issued by other administration and recognized by the TA. It authorizes the card-holder to operate licensed amateur stations in Hong Kong subject to the consent of the respective station licensees. When the card-holder operates licensed mobile and portable amateur radio equipment outdoors, the ATO is a useful identification document when questioned by a police officer or a person acting under the authority of the TA. A sample of the ATO is given in Annex B2.

3.2 Application for ATO

- (a) Applicants should complete the application form OFTA A201 and submit it together with the original and photocopy of the required supporting documents and the appropriate fee to OFTA by any of the methods as stated in the application form.
- (b) Online Licensing is also available from OFTA's web site under "Industry Focus/Licensing/Online Licensing". If the application is in order, the ATO will normally be sent to the applicant by post.

3.3 Validity Period and Fee

- (a) An ATO is valid for 5 years from the date of issue and is renewable upon expiry; or until the holder applies for its cancellation. A fee of HK\$160 shall be payable on the issue or renewal of the ATO.

4. **Call sign**

- 4.1 Each amateur station would be assigned with an identification code known as the call sign. It should be transmitted at short intervals when the station is being operated. The use of call sign enables the TA and administrations abroad to identify the source of transmission should interference arises so that corrective measures can be taken.

4.2 Call Signs for Amateur Stations in Hong Kong

- (a) Amateur call signs previously used in Hong Kong started with VS6. The assignment of the VS6 series call signs was discontinued in August 1993. Since then, the VR2 series have been introduced.

4.3 The Formats of Call Sign in Hong Kong

- (a) VR2 followed by a letter 'U' to 'Z', then followed by any combination of 2 letters (available for selection by all applicants).
- (b) VR2 followed by a letter 'A', 'B' or 'C', then followed by any combination of 2 letters (available for selection by applicants who have passed an Amateur Morse test recognized by the TA (speed 5 wpm)).
- (c) VR2 followed by any combination of 2 letters ranging from 'AA' to 'WZ' (available for selection by applicants who have passed an Amateur Morse test recognized by the TA (speed 12 wpm)).

Note: At present the TA recognises the amateur Morse test results issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education – Tsing Yi.

- 4.4 Due to limited numbers of available amateur call signs, cancelled call signs may be re-assigned to new amateurs after a lapse of two years.

5. **Recognition of Foreign Amateur Station Licences**

- 5.1 Amateur station licences issued by the following countries with operation privileges equivalent to those of the Amateur Station Licence of Hong Kong will be recognized for the issue of the Amateur Station Licence of Hong Kong.

AUSTRIA	MALTA
AUSTRALIA	MONACO
BELGIUM	NETHERLANDS
BERMUDA	NEW ZEALAND
BOTSWANA	NORWAY
BRAZIL	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
CANADA	PITCAIRN ISLAND
CYPRUS	POLAND
DENMARK	PORTUGAL
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	SIERRA LEONE
FINLAND	SOUTH AFRICA
FRANCE	SPAIN
GERMANY	SRI LANKA
GIBRALTAR	SWEDEN
ICELAND	SWITZERLAND
INDIA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
IRISH REPUBLIC	UNITED KINGDOM
ISRAEL	USA
ITALY	VANUATU
KENYA	ZIMBABWE
MALAYSIA	

6. **Foreign Radio Amateurs visiting Hong Kong**

- 6.1 A visitor holding a valid foreign amateur station licence recognized by the TA or a HAREC issued by an administration participating in the CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02 wishing to operate licensed amateur radio equipment in Hong Kong may apply for an ATO. If he wishes to establish and

maintain a station of his own, he must apply for an Amateur Station Licence of Hong Kong.

- 6.2 Call signs will be assigned to visiting amateurs holding ATO and/or Amateur Station Licence of Hong Kong according to the following arrangements:
- (a) A visiting amateur who holds a Hong Kong Identity Card will be assigned with a local call sign in the VR2 series.
 - (b) A short-stay visiting amateur who does not have a Hong Kong Identity Card will have to use his home call sign prefixed by "VR2/" when he operates amateur radio equipment in Hong Kong.
- 6.3 Alternatively, a visiting radio amateur without an ATO or he is holding an amateur station licence not currently recognized by Hong Kong may operate an amateur station in the presence of and under the direct supervision of the amateur station licensee.

7. Mainland Radio Amateurs visiting Hong Kong

- 7.1 OFTA recognizes the Amateur Station Licence issued by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China and the Amateur Station Operator's Certificate issued by the Chinese Radio Sports Association. Mainland radio amateurs holding both the above mentioned licence and certificate may apply to the TA for the issue of Amateur Station Licence and/or ATO of Hong Kong. For details, please refer to: <http://www.ofta.gov.hk/en/amateur/mra.html>.