

RADIO GA GA

The LPHCA has received a copy of a letter sent to one of our members from **Ofcom (OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS) Business Radio**. Forgive us but after reading it we felt their name should possibly end with 'n' rather 'm'.

Far be it for us to jump to conclusions but we see a 700% increase in costs for the same service.

To be fair to **Ofcom**, we will get the technical advice before making too many rash statements, however we will say at this stage that as an trade organisation that represents tens of thousands of users of business radios, they have failed to live up to their name as the **(OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS)** as they didn't communicate their consultancy to us!

Having, as a former operator moved from **solely PMR to data and voice combined equipment** I clearly remember that the old **Radio Agency** were delighted to regain much valuable radio wave or as it used to be known spectrum space! So it appears that nothing changes as valuable spectrum space is

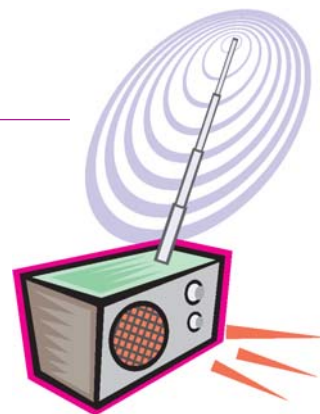
being trotted out as the excuse for massive hikes in pricing.

I haven't been out of operating long enough to forget that most of the steps being suggested in **Ofcom's** letter below means, expensive equipment changes and usually denigration of range and service.

Once in receipt of technical advice from Industry systems and Radio providers we will write to Ofcom on behalf of members who have received a similar letter.

LPHCA members please ideally email or fax us copies of similar letters received from Ofcom.

The letter follows below.



Dear Sir / Madam,

CHANGES TO YOUR BUSINESS RADIO LICENCE AND LICENCE FEE

We wrote to you in July 2006 regarding a Public consultation on changes to the way that **Ofcom** licences the radio systems used by your business. The consultation has since closed and a statement was issued in January 2007, confirming that the changes would go ahead. This statement can be found at

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/brtrading/statement/>

What is changing?

Ofcom is simplifying the way that business radio systems are licensed. This means that in 2008, your radio licence(s) will be replaced by a new one. In a small minority of cases, this will mean a significant increase to annual licence fees and some fees could double. However we are informing you of these changes to alert you to technical changes that could minimise your costs. To see what your new licence fees are likely to be, please refer to the table on page 2 of this letter. (See below). Please note that the figures provided are indicative and are based on your current frequency assignments and use.

Why are we doing this?

Radio frequencies are used by many different organisations such as television and radio broadcasters, mobile phone companies and the emergency services. However: there are only a limited number of radio frequencies that can be used in the U.K.

The changes outlined above will simplify the licensing process, reduce red tape for licensees and allow new uses to be made of the radio waves. As a result new fees have been introduced in line with a simplified licensing system. Fees will now be calculated according to the amount of radio coverage required. This is a fairer system than the previous scheme which charged licensees depending on what they used the airwaves for.

The new fees will mean that business radio users operating in densely populated urban areas, where the airwaves are more congested, will pay more for their licence because the frequencies are in high demand. This new system will encourage radio users to make efficient use of the airwaves.

What happens next?

Ofcom will write to you in the first half of 2008 in order to replace your existing licence with the new licence. The new licence fee will be payable at the first licence renewal date following this change (renewal dates will not be changed).

What does it mean for my business?

There are a number of steps you could take to keep your licence fee to a minimum.

These Include:

- Reduce transmitter power or antenna height
- Use a 'downfire' antenna
- Trade or relinquish unwanted coverage or bandwidth
- Elect to share spectrum instead Of having exclusive assignments
- Move to less congested frequency bands
- Convert to a Light Licensing product
- In the case of trunked systems with overlapping base station coverage convert from a Technically Assigned licence to an Area Defined licence.

What do I need to do now?

You can continue to use your radio as normal. However, before Ofcom contacts you in 2008 to vary your licence, it is worth considering whether you are able to take any of the steps set out above. Your equipment supplier or dealer will be able to advise you on what technical changes could be made without compromising your system.

How can I get further information?

We have enclosed a leaflet which provides more information in a handy format.

You can also e-mail the Ofcom Licensing Centre at licensingcentre@ofcom.org.uk or phone them on 020 7981 3131

Licence fees

The following table lists your current licence(s) and shows your current licence fee(s) as well as the fee that you are likely to need to pay in future:

Licence Class	Current Fee (per year)	Projected Fee (per year)
Wide Area Speech and data	£82	£470
Wide Area Speech and Data	£82	£740
Totals	£164	£1,100

Yours sincerely

Paul Jarvis Head of Business Radio