

Operating Practices & Procedures

A KEY PART OF your Foundation licence training and assessment is, knowing how to operate your radio, what frequencies to use and what to do when 'on the air'. Much of this is practical and far better learned by hands-on experience, than from a book. That is the reason why the practical assessment is part of the overall examination process required to obtain an amateur licence.

Band plans

THERE ARE SEVERAL modes of modulation and types of transmitted signal in amateur radio. FM and SSB voice are common, as is CW (Morse Code). Data modes such as radio teletype (RTTY), packet, fax and slow scan television (SSTV) are all well established. PSK31 is a computer generated text mode designed to be useable even in poor or noisy conditions, is a more recent amateur invention.

These different modes do not share frequencies well, so each type of transmission is allocated a set portion of the whole band. This is all shown in the Band Plan. The allocations are made by the International Amateur Radio Union, the IARU. This is a body composed of all the national societies, the RSGB in the case of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of reaching common agreement on matters of mutual interest. Since radio waves travel world-wide, it is necessary to agree on band planning at the international level. The band plans are not licence obligations but they are a 'gentleman's agreement' on how things should be conducted. You are expected to conform to the band plans.

A copy of the band plans for the 14MHz and 144MHz bands are shown in **Fig 24**. Please note that the IARU update the band plans from time to time and the latest versions are available from the RSGB web site. During the exam, you will be provided with

a copy of the band plans to use if you are asked a question on this topic, so there is no need to memorise them.

Log

It is not a licence requirement to keep a permanent Log although you can be asked to keep one by an Ofcom officer investigating a case of interference, which may or may not turn out to have anything to do with you. Nonetheless a Log is a very useful reference and will be essential if you want to send and receive QSL cards or submit entries in a competition. A QSL card is a card from your distant contact confirming the contact took place.

The Log is also useful to show when you were not operating and will often be accepted as showing the interference did not come from you. Acceptance depends on the Log being complete and up to date!

Part of a log book page. You should make entries every time you use your station, and those entries can also help you claim a large variety of operating awards.

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