

Sharing of Business Radio channels (was RA53)

https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080712153738/http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/ra/publication/ra_info/ra53.htm

This fact sheet explains the protocols to follow when sharing a Business Radio channel with other users, and what can be done to make sure that users can operate satisfactorily without receiving interference.

Why share?

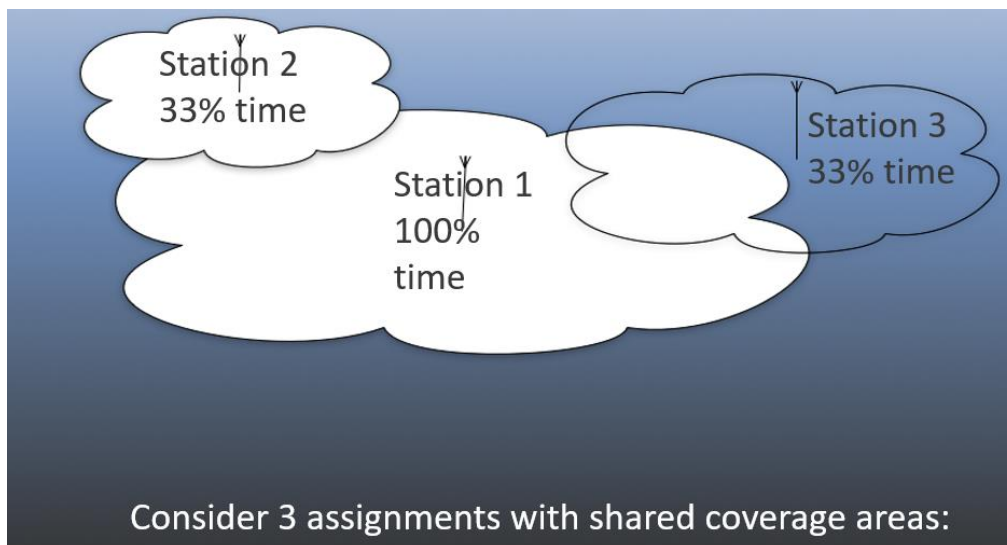
Demand for radio tends to be concentrated in the urban areas and the countryside within easy reach of cities. This means that the coverage areas of many users overlap, so many users must share radio channels by taking turns to have access to a channel.

What Is Sharing/Exclusive use? (text from TFAC)

A shared assignment is an assignment that transmits no more than 33% of the time in its busiest hour. It is this parameter that determines the amount of time that an assignment may block another assignment from transmitting at that point in time.

An exclusive assignment is one that either transmits up to 100% of the time, more than 33% of the time in its busiest hour or requires extra protection because of either business or safety critical reasons. It is recommended that if you are using a data application then you apply for an exclusive assignment unless the radio transmits for less than twenty seconds in a minute.

With the nature of Business Radio in a shared environment there may be instances when a User exceeds the number of transmissions (as defined by their assignment type) over a short period. If there are continual breaches of the guideline criteria, then it may be necessary to liaise with the Users concerned and move them to Exclusive status or move them to a different channel (where possible).



Ofcom normally authorises the use of frequencies on a shared basis by exercising its power to grant licences for a particular frequency to as many users as it considers appropriate.

A new user may be allocated the same channel in the same area at any time. It is then essential that all sharers observe proper radio practice to avoid creating a nuisance to other users. Failure to do this may break the licence conditions.

What Radio Procedures Should Channel Sharers Observe?

First, every user should be aware that the primary purpose of Business Radio is to pass messages connected with business. Business Radio is a relatively low-cost service (compared, say, with cellular radio) and the available radio channels cannot support long conversations. Messages should be kept short. When passing messages over 20-30 seconds, pause occasionally to allow other stations to give urgent messages.

When beginning a transmission always use your authorised call sign for voice or code word for data. This enables sharers to readily identify messages intended for them. It also enables Ofcom, when monitoring channels, to get a better idea of the true level of occupancy, and to identify unauthorised users who may be causing a nuisance to those who have paid for licences. (Failure to use call signs is in fact a breach of licence conditions for voice transmissions.)

You should not persistently call to unmanned vehicles or base stations. In poor reception areas, a mobile should move rather than clog the channel with broken transmissions. If a vehicle remains unmanned for long periods of time, for example those used by service engineers, it is better to use either selective signalling with automatic status acknowledgement or a paging system.

Transmission of music or radio programmes is not permitted. Obscene or offensive language must not be used on the air.

Before attempting to transmit, always check that the channel is not already being used. Equipment has a "busy" light to indicate if the channel is occupied. Never interrupt a user already on a channel; even if your message is an emergency it will be quicker to let them finish their transmission. If you try to transmit over the top, both messages will be lost

The use of continuous tone-controlled signalling system, or selective call, will reduce the annoyance from other users sharing your channel. However, because the sharers cannot be heard it is necessary to open the receiver and listen out before transmission.

On the next page there is advice that may be given to staff using radio. It also has a list of common abbreviations and the phonetic alphabet.

What should I do if another user breaks the rules?

Try to persuade the other user that it is in everyone's best interests to observe proper radio procedure and to behave considerately. If this fails, report the matter to Ofcom. We can prosecute for breaches of licence conditions or unlicensed use.

In addition, an offender's licence can be revoked for persistent failure to observe good radio practice or matters such as the use of obscene language on the air.

However, any complaint must be well-founded. The fact that a user may not have instant access to a channel because of another's operations does not generally mean there is a problem that needs investigation. We charge a fee to visit a user's site to investigate a case and, if the problem stems from the user's own equipment, the full cost of the investigation will be payable.

Further guidance is available here:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/spectrum/interference-enforcement/br-interference>

Please make any further enquiries to:

Ofcom Spectrum Licensing
PO Box 1285
Warrington, WA1 9GL.
E-Mail spectrum.licensing@ofcom.org.uk
Tel 020 7981 3131

Advice to Users of Mobile Radio Services

1. Keep conversations STRICTLY TO BUSINESS USE. Avoid personal chat and try, whenever possible, to use code names (call signs) and abbreviations. An average transmission should not occupy more than 10-15 seconds. Special conditions apply if you are transmitting data signals.
2. Do not transmit music, radio programmes, or use obscene language. All these are forbidden under the Radio Licensing Regulations.
3. Before transmitting always check that your base is not already being used. Never interrupt another user on the channel even in an emergency.
4. Do not persistently call un-manned vehicles or base stations.
5. In poor reception areas ask the operator of the mobile to relocate rather than jam the channel with broken transmissions.
6. Always pronounce your words distinctly. Do not shout! Speaking above a certain level will distort the signal.
7. When you are called, always reply immediately with your official call sign and acknowledgement to avoid the need for repeat calls.

Ofcom regularly monitors radio use and may withdraw a licence if there is persistent abuse of the licence conditions.

Abbreviations

ETA - Estimated time of arrival

ETD - Estimated time of departure

Wait or Standby - Indicates that you are unable to reply immediately and is normally followed by an indication of time, for example Wait/Standby One = wait one minute.

Say again - Repeat your last transmission

Roger - Your message has been received and understood

Over - I have finished my transmission and I await your reply. (This word is not used at the end of a final transmission).

A =	ALPHA	N =	NOVEMBER
B =	BRAVO	O =	OSCAR
C =	CHARLIE	P =	PAPA
D =	DELTA	Q =	QUEBEC
E =	ECHO	R =	ROMEO
F =	FOXTROT	S =	SIERRA
G =	GOLF	T =	TANGO
H =	HOTEL	U =	UNIFORM
I =	INDIA	V =	VICTOR
J =	JULIET	W =	WHISKY
K =	KILO	X =	X-RAY
L =	LIMA	Y =	YANKEE
M =	MIKE	Z =	ZULU