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Land Mobile Radio Amnesty

What you need to know.



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What is Land Mobile Radio?

Land Mobile Radio (LMR) refers to the use of radio for business communications and includes devices such as:

- Hand-held ('walkie talkie') radios
- Push-to-talk Wireless headsets (often used in restaurants)
- Vehicle mounted radios and trackers
- Base-stations and repeaters
- Telemetry and Paging

Is there a problem with Land Mobile Radio?

OfReg has become aware that there are a number of organisations in the Cayman Islands who are using land mobile radio equipment without a licence. This has serious consequences:

- Harmful interference is being caused to licensed users, preventing them from using their radio equipment safely and effectively
- There are significant safety risks associated with miscommunication
- The operation of medical devices, such as pacemakers, can be affected
- Disruption can be caused to emergency and safety-critical services including the port and airport
- Interference to international research satellites has been caused by land mobile radio users in the Cayman Islands
- Some usage contravenes international treaties putting the Cayman Islands at risk of censure by the United Nations

What types of Land Mobile Radio devices need a licence?

Professional Land Mobile Radios. Without the requisite licence, these devices cannot be legally used in the Cayman Islands and unless licensed, should not be brought into the country. Family Radios - cheap devices typically used for recreation - do not require a licence.

Professional hand-held radios usually have **antennas which can be removed**.

They often have **removable battery packs**.

They usually have **two control knobs** (channel and volume).

They may have any number of channels.

They are often slightly larger than Family Radio devices, with bodies longer than 5 inches and are usually all black in colour.

The most common manufacturers are: **Baofeng, Hytera (HYT), Icom, Motorola, Retevis, TYT and Wouxun**.

These radios **require either a Radio Dealer, Land Mobile Radio or Amateur Radio licence** from OfReg.





Why is a licence required to use such equipment?

Radio frequencies are a valuable national resource and OfReg has been entrusted by the Cayman Islands Government (CIG) to manage this resource on the country's behalf. OfReg is responsible for issuing licenses for all use of radio equipment in the Cayman Islands.

Licensing is essential to ensure that those who use radio equipment can do so without causing or suffering from harmful interference which could disrupt or obstruct communication, especially to business critical, emergency or safety-related services (such as the emergency services, port or aircraft).

It is also a legal requirement under the Information and Communication Technology Act (ICT Act) that all use of ICT services, networks and apparatus must be licensed.

Why should I licence my equipment?

Without licensing your radios, you risk suffering interruption to your communications. You may also be causing interference to a licensed user. Due to the use of various privacy measures on modern radios, just because you cannot hear anyone else on your channel does not mean that the channel is empty.

Imagine a situation where two cranes are unknowingly using the same channel. One team instructs their crane to lower the cable but this is received by a second operator whose radio is on the same channel. This could lead to a potentially life-threatening situation where a crane is inadvertently lowered whilst people are still working beneath it.

What should I do if I need a licence for my Land Mobile Radios?

Apply for a licence! Until the end of 2024, OfReg is offering an amnesty to anyone or any company using land mobile radio equipment that does not currently have a licence. Applications from new licensees will be processed without considering how long the equipment has been in use.

What does a licence cost?

Land mobile radio licences currently cost CI\$20 per radio per year, plus CI\$75 per frequency channel per year. Note that just because your radio has 16 channels does not mean that you will need to pay for 16 frequency channels, and OfReg will work to optimise the situation for each licensee.

Be aware that radios operating on their 'factory default' channels may require re-programming. OfReg operates a first-come, first-served approach to radio frequency use and most standard factory default channels have already been licensed to existing users.

What if I don't licence my equipment?

It is an offence to install or operate any land mobile radio equipment without a licence. Per Section 82 of the ICT Act anyone found using radio equipment without a licence may be subject to a fine of CI\$50,000 and confiscation of their equipment.

OfReg has sophisticated radio monitoring and direction-finding equipment which can be used to locate and identify users of land mobile radio equipment. Anyone found using such equipment after the end of the amnesty will be handled in line with the laws and regulations of the Cayman Islands.



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