

Amateur Radio – Understanding Callsigns

When you listen on the amateur radio bands, you will hear many callsigns. Usually amateurs give their own callsigns and that of the station with whom they are in contact at the beginning and end of each transmission. Callsigns in the UK are allocated by the Radio Licensing Centre. Callsigns in England begin with ‘G’ or ‘M’ for full licences and ‘2E’ for Intermediate (Novice) licences. An additional prefix is added for stations in other parts of the U.K. as follows:-

G England	GD Isle of Man	GI Northern Island	GJ Jersey
GM Scotland	GU Guernsey	GW Wales	

These prefix letters are followed by a number which denotes the of licence and several letters for individual identification. i.e. G4ABC indicates an English station with a Class A licence and 2W0ABC is a Welsh station with a Class A Intermediate licence.

A class A full licence holder has passed the morse code test and is allowed to use all of the available amateur bands. A class B full licence holder may only use amateur bands from 50MHz upwards. The number in the callsign indicates the class of licence:-

<u>Class A Full Licence</u>	<u>Class B Full Licence</u>	<u>Class A Intermediate (Novice)</u>
G0AAA to G0ZZZ	G1AAA to G1ZZZ	2E0AAA to 2E0ZZZ
G2AAA to G2ZZZ	G6AAA to G6ZZZ	
G3AAA to G3ZZZ	G7AAA to G7ZZZ	<u>Class B Intermediate (Novice)</u>
G5AAA to G5ZZZ	G8AAA to G8ZZZ	2E1AAA to 2E1ZZZ
G4AAA to G4ZZZ	M1AAA to M1ZZZ	
M0AAA to M0ZZZ		

There are also a number of two letter callsigns in existence. These are early class A licence holders, regardless of the number following the prefix letters. i.e. G2MI, G8LT, G5LP - all class A.

Special event callsigns may also be issued and have the prefix ‘GB’. These callsigns are held up to 28 days to cover particular events. The letters of the callsigns are chosen by the event organisers and are usually connected with the event. For example GB4NDS stands for ‘Northampton District Scouts’, GB2GP for ‘Gilwell Park’ etc.

Other countries use different systems and prefix letters. A few examples are given below:-

F France	HB Switzerland	I Italy	EA Spain
VU India	LX Luxembourg	VK Australia	VE Canada
OE Austria	CT Portugal	ZL New Zealand	ON Belgium
SK Sweden	LA Norway	OZ Denmark	PA Netherlands
VP Falklands	W USA		