



Statement on power increase for 5.8 GHz FWA

Amendment to the regulations for broadband fixed
wireless access in the band 5725-5850 MHz to allow higher
power use

Statement Publication date:

31 May 2007

Contents

Section		Page
1	Summary and Background	2
2	Changes to the regulations for 5.8 GHz FWA	4

Section 1

Summary

The UK regulations governing civil use of the band 5725 - 5850 MHz for broadband fixed wireless access (FWA) will change from today.

This is a result of responses to the Ofcom consultation on Higher power limits for licence exempt devices carried out in July 2006. The responses to the consultation were favourable in supporting the proposal to increase in the maximum power limit from 2 to 4 Watts EIRP (in all geographic areas).

Concern has been raised that a so-called digital divide exists in the availability of services, particularly broadband, in rural and urban areas in the UK. Ofcom's Communications Market Report: Nations and Regions showed that the gap is closing and 41% of adults in rural areas have broadband internet at home compared to 45% of adults in urban areas. Changing regulation in this band, enabling greater geographical coverage, could help to increase access to wireless broadband in rural areas.

Background

The band 5725 - 5850 MHz (5 GHz Band C) can be used to provide fixed wireless broadband services to a range of business, private and public users, with particular application in areas where broadband is unavailable through standard delivery platforms. The use of equipment in this band is subject to a light licensing regime that allows 5 GHz (band C) terminals to be registered online via Ofcom's website.

The Spectrum Efficiency Scheme (SES) is a Treasury-funded research programme that seeks technical innovation in the efficient use of the radio spectrum in the UK. The SES is targeted towards supporting Ofcom's regulatory function set out in the Communications Act 2003; to ensure the optimal use of the electro-magnetic spectrum.

Under the SES Ofcom carried out a formal consultation on "Higher power limits for licence exempt devices" in July 2006. This consultation included a proposal to adopt the higher power limit of 4 Watts EIRP for fixed broadband services (in all geographical areas). Ofcom published a statement in November 2006 proposing to implement this change by updating the relevant licence conditions for the band. The consultation document and statement are available from the Ofcom website at: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/powerlimits/>

Responses to the consultation indicated that this change could provide benefits to stakeholders by allowing greater use of the available spectrum while reducing equipment costs through the economy of scale by aligning the UK regulations with those of other countries in Europe (ECC Recommendation (06) 04)¹.

¹ ECC Recommendation (06) 04 "use of the band 5725 – 5875 MHz for broadband fixed wireless access" is available from the European Radiocommunications Office (www.ero.dk)

Section 2

Changes to the regulations for 5.8 GHz

The UK Interface Requirement - IR 2007 - stipulates technical regulations for use of the band 5725 - 5850 MHz for broadband fixed wireless access. In order to allow the increased power limit, Ofcom had to make the necessary draft amendments to IR 2007 and carry out the notification procedure required under EU law. This process is now completed. The version of IR 2007 that included the higher power limit will come into force from today.

IR 2007 is available for download from the Ofcom website at the following URL:
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radiocomms/ifi/tech/interface_req/uk_interface_2007.pdf

For further information please contact:

Dave Donachie
Spectrum Policy Group
Ofcom
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

Email: David.Donachie@ofcom.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7981 3173