



**Position Paper from the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the
Kingdom of Bahrain on the Use of Licence-Exempt Frequency Bands**

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Introduction

1. The provisions of the Telecommunications Law, specifically the amended Article 43, empower the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (the “Authority”) to exempt certain frequency bands from the requirement of obtaining a frequency licence where their use is in accordance with the conditions set by the Authority.
2. This Position Paper (the “Paper”) sets out the Authority’s views on the regulatory treatment and framework governing the use of licence-exempt frequency bands in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
3. The Paper reflects the Authority’s current position and is intended to provide clarity to stakeholders, including device manufacturers, importers, service providers, and the general public, regarding the use of radiofrequency bands designated for licence-exempt operations. This Paper does not constitute a binding regulation but may form the basis for future regulatory updates.
4. The Authority reserves the right to revise its position in response to market developments, technological innovation, or international best practice.

Background

5. In recent years, the increasing proliferation of wireless technologies such as Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Zigbee, and LoRaWAN has highlighted the importance of licence-exempt spectrum in enabling innovation and supporting a wide range of low-power, short-range wireless applications. These applications play a vital role in facilitating Internet of Things (IoT) deployments, smart city infrastructure, and next-generation consumer electronics.
6. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has identified a number of spectrum bands suitable for licence-exempt use, and national regulators have adopted frameworks to facilitate access to these frequencies on a licence-exempt basis. The Kingdom has similarly allocated certain frequency bands for such use, subject to applicable technical and regulatory conditions as may be issued by the Authority from time to time.

Policy Objectives

7. The Authority’s policy objectives with respect to licence-exempt frequency bands are to:
 - a. Promote efficient and shared use of radio spectrum;
 - b. Facilitate low-barrier access to spectrum to enable innovation and market entry;
 - c. Ensure fair access while safeguarding licensed frequencies from harmful interference;
 - d. Encourage the adoption of international standards and best practice; and
 - e. Provide clear technical and compliance requirements for stakeholders.

Scope and Application

8. This Paper applies to the users of radio equipment operating in licence-exempt frequency bands within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as designated in the Technical Specifications (Requirement for Type Approval) document¹ (each as amended from time to time).
9. All users of licence-exempt devices must comply with the relevant technical specifications, including those set out in the Type Approval Regulation and the Technical Specifications (Requirement for Type Approval) document.

Regulatory Framework

10. Licence-exempt devices operate on a non-interference, non-protection basis. This means:
 - a. Users of such devices must not cause harmful interference to licensed users;
 - b. Users of such devices are not entitled to protection from interference caused by other users; and
 - c. Users of such devices must cease operation upon notification by the Authority if interference occurs.
11. No individual spectrum licence or usage fee is required for operating within designated licence-exempt bands, provided all conditions and technical requirements are met.

Technical Requirements

12. Devices must only operate in frequency bands permitted by the Authority and listed in the latest version of the Authority's Technical Specifications (Requirements for Type Approval).
13. Power levels and emission limits must not exceed those specified in the Authority's Technical Specifications (Requirements for Type Approval). Devices operating outside these limits may be subject to enforcement action.
14. Examples of approved licence-exempt uses include:
 - a. Wi-Fi devices operating in the 2.4 GHz, 5 GHz and 6GHz ISM bands;
 - b. Zigbee, Bluetooth and other low-power short-range devices;
 - c. Users of wireless terminals equipment operating within licensed networks (including, but not limited to, mobile handsets, satellite terminals, tablets, customer premises equipment, and other user devices);
 - d. Private Mobile Radios 446 MHz band (446.0063-446.20625 MHz), operate with a maximum power level of 5 watts, on a no-interference, no-protection basis.

- e. Public services receive only services (e.g. GPS, satellite TV, radio receivers).

Type Approval and Certification

- 15. All radio equipment intended for use in licence-exempt bands must be type-approved by the Authority unless exempted under applicable regulations.
- 16. Any entity intending to offer public wireless services may only do so after acquiring the appropriate service licence from the Authority.
- 17. Personal imports for private use are exempt from formal type approval.

Interference and Enforcement

- 18. The Authority will monitor spectrum usage and take enforcement action as per the provisions of the Telecommunications Law where licence-exempt operations cause harmful interference or violate the existing regulatory framework.
- 19. Enforcement measures may include warnings, equipment confiscation, and fines.
- 20. Users are required to cooperate with the Authority in mitigating interference.