

ARRL UHF/Microwave Band Plan Committee

Dear Fellow Amateurs,

The ARRL Board of Directors and Officers recognize the need to update the published band plans for our UHF and microwave bands between 902 MHz and 3.5 GHz. In order to do this effectively, we need to know how various segments of these bands are now being utilized around the country. You can help us by sharing what you know about local usage in your area and by asking other users whom we may not have reached -- both individuals and groups -- to do the same.

Benefits of Band Plans

The FCC has left management of our highest bands to the Amateur Radio community. It's up to us to promote activity of our bands and to minimize possible conflicts among incompatible uses. The increasing interest in microwaves for communication and experimentation, along with advances in technology and the proliferation of new digital modes, presents exciting opportunities for amateurs. Band plans should provide room for existing applications, for experimentation and for new uses and technologies.

Regulators are under pressure to find room for ever-expanding commercial and consumer technologies, and our slices of spectrum are at risk from such pressure. ARRL staff and volunteers are working to defend our spectrum by making the case with regulatory and political officials that we are putting the frequencies we have to good use and are, in doing so, serving the public interest. Unlike more intense frequency uses such as broadcast, radar and satellite channels, many amateur uses do not show up in conventional "surveys" of spectrum, so the nature and extent of our band utilization is not apparent to those conducting such surveys. The better our internal knowledge of current practices and planned applications around the country, the more effective our efforts to protect the amateur bands from adjacent users and proposed reallocations will be.

The Update Process

The purpose of these band plans is not to tell you what to do or where to do it. Rather, it is to share information about how you are using our bands now and about future plans and projects that will make use of them. Thus, the first and most important step is to collect information from you so that we have a better picture of the various uses and projects going on around the country. We know that practices may differ from one geographic region to another, often driven by local conditions or needs. We also recognize constraints that will prevent one plan from fitting every user group. Our current band plans defer to the formal determinations by regional frequency coordinating bodies.

After gathering data we will evaluate the range of uses and draft a revision for each of the bands under consideration. Those drafts will be published for your review and comment and amended as necessary, after which the proposed plans will be brought to the ARRL Board of Directors for final approval.

What We Need From You

You may know other amateurs or groups who are using -- or have plans to use -- one or more of the 33 cm and higher bands. Please share this request for input with them and encourage them to respond. We're not tallying "votes," so collective input from user groups will be more helpful and faster to compile than multiple copies of the same data from individual group members.

We ask that you record your own input, whether as an individual or representing a group, using the accompanying reply format in order to help speed the compiling of the responses. Use a separate page for each band for which you wish to provide input. Our current task covers the 33 cm, 23 cm, 13 cm and 9 cm bands, but we also welcome your information concerning the 6 cm, 3 cm and 1.25 cm bands for our later use. If you feel the need to provide more lengthy explanations or discussion, please see "Submitting Additional Information" below.

(Column 1) The general frequency range of each activity, in decimal megahertz.

(Column 2) The mode or modulation type employed, using common descriptors such as FM voice, ATV or video, high-speed data, weak-signal digital, etc, or FCC designators.

(Column 3) The approximate bandwidth in kilohertz of an individual signal and the number of simultaneous signals needed to perform the function or application.

(Column 4) A description of the function or activity, such as repeater control, D-STAR data link, satellite input/output, real-time video, voice repeater output, EME, weak-signal terrestrial, etc.

(Column 5) Whether the activity is current ("C"), under development ("D") or proposed for the future ("F").

(Column 6) Reasons for selecting a specific band or segment for the activity and/or any conditions that would preclude conducting the activity in another segment of the same band or on a different band, such as operating limits of modified commercial gear, noise between xxx and yyy MHz from adjacent non-amateur bands, frequency restrictions faced by operators in other countries / regions, unique propagation characteristics, existing satellite frequencies, etc.

Submitting Additional Information

We also welcome comments you think would be helpful in completing our work. If, for example, you have specific knowledge as to trends in the use of adjacent non-amateur bands or expansion by primary users where we are secondary that may impact the future use of our bands, please share it with our Microwave Band Plan committee as a separate narrative.

Please submit your response by December 15, 2011, to microwave-band-plan@arrl.org. If you have questions about the reporting format, you may direct them to the same e-mail address.

Thank you for helping us to collect this important information.

73,

Rick Roderick, K5UR, Chair
ARRL Microwave Band Plan Committee