



SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE

National Body for Amateur Radio in South Africa

P O BOX 1721 STRUBENSVALLEI 1735 SOUTH AFRICA

TEL (011) 675-2393 FAX 088 011 675-2793

EMAIL secretary@sarl.org.za

Visit the SARL website at www.sarl.org.za

Please reply to Hans van de Groenendaal: hans@intekom.co.za

Mandla Mchunu
Manager: Spectrum Management
ICASA
mmchunu@icasa.org.za

28 April 2009

Dear Mr Mchunu

Representation in respect of the draft radio frequency spectrum fee regulations as published in Government Gazette 32029 of 16 March 2009 by the South African Radio League, the National Body for Amateur Radio.

The South African Radio League is concerned about the setting up of a minimum fee of R120 and an obligatory payment of the Amateur Radio license fee for a minimum period of 5 years.

The ANC policy congress in Polokwane made some far reaching decisions which as the governing party with the majority in Parliament are likely to become policy. In respect of the use of radio frequencies the following determination was minuted by the ANC:

124. The ANC and its Government should ensure that the allocation of spectrum - which is a scarce national public resource - must contribute to the promotion of national interests, development and diversity. This should involve increasing the amount of spectrum and licenses dedicated to public use; for example, community radio and TV and mobile technologies.

Amateur Radio falls under "community radio" as it provides a community service through supporting communication during disasters and sporting events. In addition its ongoing research in technology as well as providing a career stimulus in this field for young people and a healthy recreational past time for the more senior citizens, Amateur Radio licenses should be free as the Amateur Service contributes to the promotion of national interest.



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CURRENT STATUS

The current license fee is R27.00 per annum. An increase to R120 is an excessive increase. While the SARL appreciates that there has not been an increase in license fees for many years, it cannot accept the proposed new minimum fee of R120. A 10 or even 15% increase would have been palatable.

THE AMATEUR RADIO COMMUNITY

Radio Amateurs are representative of the South African population and can be divided into three age groups:

Under 25: Learners and students that are encouraged to take up amateur radio as part of career development in electronics and communication, an aspect that is supported at all levels of government.

25 – 60 Years: A mature group who have settled in a career with a steady income

60 Years and over: The senior citizens of our country who still make a valuable contribution

The SARL proposes the following amendments to the draft regulations:

1. Exempt Amateur Radio from the minimum fee of R120
2. Introduce a three tier structure for amateur radio licenses:

Under 25: Free

Senior citizens (over 60) and persons on a state or disability grant: a substantially reduced fee for example R10 per annum

All other groups (25 – 60 years old): R50 per annum.

3. All other services R50
 - Beacon
 - Change of call sign request
 - Guest or special license
 - Listener
 - Repeater station including links

Member of the International Amateur Radio Union



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- Digipeater/Bulletin boards
 - Experimental station for weather satellite reception and retransmission
- 4 No obligatory multi year licence but optional 5 and 10 years. Having to pay 5 years in advance will serious affect senior citizens and the student and the learner generation

FURTHER MOTIVATION

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Amateur Radio provides a major drive in promoting a career in electronics, communication and scientific disciplines at school level, initiatives that are supported by Government and regarded as one of the most pressing developmental requirements to take South Africa on an industrial growth path.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Amateur Radio not only develops people and technology but provides valuable community support when communication is most needed in disaster situations, natural or man induced, when all other channels fail.

Radio Amateurs support sporting and other major national events with communications

A HEALTHY PAST TIME FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Amateur Radio offers a healthy and rewarding past time for senior citizens who have made their contribution to the country. The proposal of a minimum fee of R120 and a minimum period of 5 years will punish this group of citizens who for many years have paid their dues to the country. They need special consideration. A country that not supports its elders is a poor country!

And while in their retired years. Senior Radio Amateurs still make a contribution to the community by supporting emergency communication and even more importantly mentoring the young people.

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In view of the afore going, we request that ICASA gives serious consideration when reviewing the draft regulations and grant the SARL an opportunity to present our objections and proposals during any public hearing that ICASA may decide to arrange.

Amateur Radio is a valuable National resource. We must, at all times, keep it that way and devise fee structures that will support the development and expansion.

Thank you

Rassie Erasmus
President SARL

Hans van de Groenendaal
Councillor Regulatory Affairs
012 991 4662
082 781 4631

Email: hans@intekom.co.za