

FACT SHEET NO.7

Call Signs and their Uses

The Minister responsible for Telecommunications, through the Telecommunications Unit, is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the suitable allocation and sensitization regarding the functions and appropriate use of call signs in Barbados.

All transmissions in the following services should carry identification signals:

- Amateur service
- Broadcasting service
- Fixed service in the bands below 28,000 KHz
- Mobile service
- Standard frequency and time signal service

Exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- Survival craft stations when transmitting distress signals automatically
- Emergency Position Indicating Radiobeacons [Except transmissions by satellite EPIRBs operating in the band 406-406.1 MHz, or the band 1645.5-1646.5 MHz or by EPIRBs using digital selective calling techniques.]

In accordance with ITU specifications the prefix for Barbadian call signs is "8P".

Radio Amateur Service

A Barbadian call sign is issued to any person who is eligible for and successfully acquires the Radio Amateur Licence from the Telecommunications Unit under the umbrella of the Government of Barbados. An individual who is a citizen of another country who does not possess a Barbadian Radio Amateur Licence may be authorized to use his/her call sign with the permission of the Telecommunications Unit. This only applies to those persons who attained their Amateur Licence at the General and Extra level.

Individuals from other territories who wish to be assigned a Barbadian call sign must first submit this request, in writing, to the Chief Telecommunications Officer.

Call signs which are allocated to Barbadian nationals are identified by the prefix “8P6”, whereas those which are assigned to non-nationals are identified by the prefix “8P9”.

Call signs are assigned to an individual for a lifetime. However there are cases when a call sign becomes available for re-assignment. In the case of the operator’s death the call sign remains reserved or in ‘Silent Key’ status for a period of three (3) years, after which the call sign becomes available once more.

Aircraft Stations

Aircraft have two means of identification, one of which is the aircraft registration number and the other is the aircraft call sign. The allocation of the registration number to aircraft is the responsibility of the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization). This number is allocated to the aircraft as soon as it leaves the assembly line and is determined based on the country from which the aircraft would be operating within, for example an aircraft operating from Barbados would be issued a registration number which begins with the prefix ‘8P’, it is unique to that aircraft and is valid for the lifetime of the aircraft. The call sign of the aircraft however, may be changed at any point.

Commercial airlines usually have registered call signs for each aircraft, which remain unique and unchanged during the lifetime of the aircraft. Private aircraft do not usually register their call sign and often use their aircraft registration number as their call sign.

Before an aircraft travels to any destination a flight plan is sent in advance, this flight plan informs the authorities at the intended destination of the call sign and registration number of the aircraft. On arrival into the scheduled destination the pilot identifies his aircraft to the control tower, thereafter the control tower would use that call sign to address the aircraft during its stopover in the destination.

Citizen Band (CB) Radio Operator

Unlike Amateur Radio operators CB operators are allowed to choose their own call sign. This call sign is often referred to as a ‘handle’.

During the application process the CB operator indicates his/her personal choice as their call sign.

Ship Stations

Ship station call signs are allocated by the Telecommunications Unit in a sequential manner. This call sign is used through out the lifetime of the ship as a means of identifying the vessel. Vessels which already have a call sign from their respective countries may use their own call sign while in Barbados or may request a Barbadian Ship Station Call sign in which case a letter should be sent to the Chief Telecommunications Officer stating their wish to be temporarily allocated a Barbadian Ship Station call sign for the duration of their stay.

Very High Frequency (VHF)

The Telecommunications Unit assigns the call signs associated with this mode of communication, sequentially. A company or an individual is allocated a particular set of call signs depending on the number of repeaters, base and hand held pieces of equipment they are licenced for. These call signs are also for a lifetime. If at any point the operator wishes to discontinue the use of his/her licence for a particular piece of equipment a letter must be sent to the Chief Telecommunications Officer notifying the Telecommunications Unit of such a change.

Licences

Licences for all mentioned communication systems are renewable annually and expire on December 31st of each year. Failure to comply with the regulations set out in The Telecommunications (Licence Fees) Regulations 2003, will result in action being taken by the Chief Telecommunications Officer in accordance with section 13 of The Telecommunications Act 2001-36. The call sign would be withdrawn from the individual after a period of time prescribed by the Chief Telecommunications Officer.

For more information the Telecommunication Policy Document “**Call Signs**” is available from the Telecommunications Unit.

Issued by
The Minister responsible for Telecommunications