

Licensing regime

Two systems of licensing operate in New Zealand: the radio licensing regime and the spectrum licensing regime. The systems are mutually exclusive and all licences fall within one or the other of the two systems depending on frequency. Most licences under both regimes have payable fees.

Radio licensing regime

The system generally referred to as the Radio Licensing Regime, or previously known as the Apparatus Licensing Regime, is an administrative system regulated by the Radiocommunications Regulations 2001 made pursuant to the [Radiocommunications Act](#).

The licences issued under this regime are known as radio licences. Radio licences are typically:

- specific to a transmitter
- revalidated each year
- specific about the type of the equipment and transmission methods used

Examples of radio licences are:

- Ship licences (for maritime radio transmitters)
- Land Mobile licences (including mobile communications)
- Satellite licences

The granting of radio licences are subject to [Government policies](#).

Spectrum licensing regime

This system is generally referred to as the Spectrum Licensing Regime, the Management Rights Regime or the Long Term Tradable Property Rights Regime.

The Spectrum Licensing Regime involves the creation of long term and tradable property rights for the use of the radio spectrum.

The Spectrum Licensing Regime provides for two basic types of spectrum rights:

Management rights

Management rights cover a block of the radio spectrum. They are essentially the right to issue licences for the use of that part of the spectrum. Management rights do not themselves confer the right to make any transmissions.

There are 209 management rights current as at March 2007. A list may be viewed at [Management Rights](#). The Government retains ownership of 70 of these including those covering the public broadcasting spectrum (radio and television). Licences are issued by the government according to a mix of commercial and social policies.

Private sector interests own 139 management rights in various spectrum areas covering cellular telephone, MDS, IMS (LMDS) and fixed link services. Managers in these bands are free to issue licences according to their own policies.

Spectrum licences

Spectrum licences are granted by the owner of a management right and are typically:

- assigned for a defined period of time.
- non-specific to equipment or transmission methods.

- defining an envelope within which the licence holder is free to operate at his or her discretion.

There are three types of spectrum licence. The most common type is a licence to transmit radio waves and to have no interference. These confer the right to make transmission on a specified frequency and the right to stop other persons transmitting interfering signals on the same frequency. The other two licence types are licences to have no interference on a specified frequency and licences to transmit unwanted emissions.

Examples of spectrum licences are:

- Broadcasting licences (FM, AM)
- 3G cellular licences