



Wireless Licensing Guide

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INTRODUCTION

If you've read our license-free cheat sheet, and are still not sure where to turn, you should keep reading! With the recent restrictions on the 700MHz band, our usable range for events and installations is narrowed, but there's still plenty of room left. UHF wireless microphones & in ear monitors in the UK can be licensed via Ofcom between 470-694MHz – but how do you know where to begin? To avoid operating illegally (and fees of up to £5000!), here are your options:



UK WIRELESS MICROPHONE LICENSE (SHARED)

This is collection of frequencies, covering TV Channel 38 (606.500-613.500MHz), 823-832MHz and 1785-1805MHz (check region – Northern Ireland and a few other areas differ slightly). These ranges are reserved exclusively in the UK for wireless microphone and IEM usage and are therefore great options for users who wish to run a limited number of systems.

The exact limit of channels is highly dependent on the wireless equipment (i.e. brand and product group) and can range anywhere from 4 to 50 systems running simultaneously. That said, average system density on CH38 is around 8 to 12 channels.

These frequency ranges can be used for live events and fixed installations on the understanding that this is a shared range, meaning that other licensed users may also be using this part of the spectrum. Licenses are held by the equipment owner, meaning a single Shared License can cover an entire inventory.

Fees:

£75 per year or £135 per two years when booked via Ofcom's website.

Recommend?

Yes. Great for hire companies with kit on the move, to avoid new licenses for each job. Can be great for installations but be wary of others using the spectrum locally. Not recommended for mission critical transmission.



STANDARD LICENSE (COORDINATED)

The coordinated license is a bespoke solution which offers the best reliability for a system, as you effectively own a set of frequencies for use at your site for the duration of the license period. Unlike the UK Wireless Microphone License these frequencies would not be shared, and if you experience any interference problems Ofcom can take action on your behalf.

It is required to consult with Ofcom Planners for the allocation of frequencies to ensure zero interference to or from other users or TV broadcasts. We recommend this option for professional and critical usage, when lots of microphones are going to be used together, or if the user is in a very dense area such as city centres.

Fixed site licenses can be purchased per microphone system, or you can license an entire 8MHz channel, which becomes cost-effective if you have at least 6 microphones that can fit within the same channel together. Frequencies are booked from anywhere between 15 minutes to 12 months.

Fees:	Varies depending on time required. One frequency for 48 hours is £8.50, £28 per year, or £168 for an 8MHz channel per year.
Recommend?	Yes, this is the most protected option for licensing.



CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to remember that there are many sources of interference to a wireless system: LED walls, computers, HDMI cables, atmospheric conditions, and illegal users to name a few! This ultimately means that interference free operation can never be guaranteed, but these are some of the best ways to ensure a protected and functional system.

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