

Microlights and Aircraft Radio



It's good to have a radio

Pilots who fly with a radio that receives and transmits gain several benefits:

- The enhancement of flight safety by improving situational awareness, knowledge of other aircraft, and reducing the likelihood of mid-air collision (MAC).
- The ability to request information in-flight that will improve their knowledge, such as weather conditions ahead, which will help them make decisions to complete the flight safely.
- The ability to talk with airspace controllers to obtain permission to fly through controlled airspace in coordination with other aircraft.
- To ask for help when unsure of position, lost or in need of assistance.

Fitting a radio

Radios are usually fitted to microlight aircraft as a minor modification. The BMAA has a very simple and easy to follow guide to how to go about the modification. The guide is in the form of a Technical Information Leaflet published on the BMAA website. This is the link, <https://www.bmaa.org/information-library/aircraft-technical-information/modifications>, or search SMM 101 or SMM 102. To upgrade an installation to a new 8.33MHz radio there is information in SMM 119. SMM 119:

https://www.bmaa.org/files/til_119_declaration_of_change_of_radio_type.pdf

Station licence

You will need to have a licence for the radio in your aircraft. Radio licenses are issued by Ofcom. There is an application form on the Ofcom website. This is the link

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0022/123646/OfW585-Aircraft-radio-licence-application-form.pdf

Operator licence

As the operator of the radio you will need to hold a licence issued by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (UK CAA).

To qualify for the licence, known as a Flight Radiotelephony Operator's Licence (FRTOL), you will have to pass a written theory examination and a practical test. You will also have to demonstrate an acceptable level of understanding and use of the English language. Further details from the CAA website

<https://www.caa.co.uk/General-aviation/Pilot-licences/EASA-requirements/General/Flight-radio-telephony-operator-licence/>

Frequencies

From 1 January 2019 UK radio frequencies were all transposed to 8.33 MHz. All radios must now be able to transmit and receive on 8.33MHz.

Microlight Frequencies

There are two frequencies allocated for use by microlights.

129.830, replaces 129.825 and is used by microlight airfields as a ground to air frequency

129.835, a new frequency from April 2019 for air-to-air use by microlight aircraft to assist with situational awareness.