



# Summerland Amateur Radio Club

## Regulations exam study guide

### Amateur radio call signs

### Regulations exam extract

## Amateur Radio call signs

The regulations exam paper is likely to have questions related to amateur radio call signs. The definitive document is the 28 page document Amateur radio call sign policy located on the ACMA web page <https://www.acma.gov.au/amateur-radio-resources#documents>

This is a summary of key points extracted from the ACMA document by SARC Education.

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### Call Signs

Call signs are a unique combination of letters and numbers used to identify a person making a radio communication transmission. Call signs are an important element of the amateur radio service.

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### Call sign structure

Each call sign is generally composed of a prefix (usually 2 letters, followed by a combination of numbers) and a suffix (a combination of letters).

Generally, 2-letter and 3-letter call signs assigned in Australia have VK as the prefix.

The number assigned to a station typically identifies the state or territory where the station is operating.

The number contained in a call sign prefix will generally reflect an amateur operator's state or territory of residence at the time when the call sign is first assigned, consistent with the following table:

Numeric identifier State/Territory

0 Antarctic

1 Australian Capital Territory

2 New South Wales

3 Victoria

4 Queensland

5 South Australia

6 Western Australia

7 Tasmania

8 Northern Territory

9 Australian External Territories

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### **Types of call signs**

As the call sign entity, the ACMA will allocate call signs of the following types:

- 2-letter call signs: where the prefix is VK, with 2 letters following
- 3-letter call signs: where the prefix is VK with 3 letters following
- special event call signs: where the prefix is VI, VK or AX
- contest call signs (2x1 call signs): where the prefix is VJ, VK or VL

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### **Use of call signs**

The class licence requires transmission of a call sign at the beginning and end of a transmission or series of transmissions. and at least once every 10 minutes during a transmissions longer than 10 minutes.

The class licence also allows a person to use a call sign of a qualified amateur operator, as long as the person is under the qualified operator's supervision.

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### **Two-letter call signs (except VK0 and VK9)**

Two-letter call signs use the prefix VK, a number (usually indicating the state or territory where the amateur operator is located), followed by a suffix of 2 letters (for example, VK7AA).

Two-letter call signs can only be assigned to amateur operators who hold an advanced qualification. Applicants need to provide evidence of their advanced qualification level when applying for a 2-letter call sign.

Amateur clubs can also apply to be assigned 2-letter call signs. In this case, the person applying on behalf of the club must provide evidence that they hold an Advanced qualification and that the club is a 'legal person' (see 'Club call signs').

### **Three-letter call signs (except VK0 and VK9)**

Three-letter call signs use the prefix VK, a number (usually indicating the state or territory where the amateur station is located), followed by a suffix of 3 letters (for example, VK8RHP). Amateur operators of any qualification level (foundation, standard or advanced) can apply for a 3-letter call sign. An applicant needs to provide evidence of their qualification when applying for a 3-letter call sign.

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### **VK0 and VK9 (2 and 3 letters)**

Call signs assigned with the prefix VK0 (with either a 2 or 3 letter suffix) can only be assigned to amateur operators currently located in, or who provide information to show that they will soon be located in, the Antarctic. Call signs assigned with the prefix VK0 must only be used when the operator is located in the Antarctic.

Call signs assigned with the prefix VK9 (with either a 2- or 3-letter suffix) can only be assigned to amateur operators intending to visit, or who already reside on, Australian islands or external territories, other than the Antarctic. Call signs assigned with the prefix VK9 must only be used when the operator is located in an Australian external territory.

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### **Special event call signs**

Call signs that are unique and assigned in relation to a particular event or occasion are called special event call signs. The events include those of international, national, state/territory or local significance. The types of special event call signs the ACMA will assign are:

- VI prefix, followed by 1 to 4 numbers, followed by a suffix of up to 10 letters
- AX prefix, followed by 1 to 4 numbers, followed by a suffix of up to 10 letters
- VK prefix, followed by 1 to 4 numbers, followed by a suffix of up to 10 letters.

Amateur operators can also choose a suffix of more than 4 characters, but the suffix must have a connection to the event or date. Amateur operators should also consider the practicality and reasonableness of using a longer call sign during transmission – we will not assign a special event call sign with more than 10 characters in the suffix

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### **Contest call signs**

Contest call signs can be assigned using the prefixes VJ, VK or VL, followed by a number (indicating the state or territory where the amateur operator is located), followed by a suffix of one letter (for example, VL3A).

Contest call signs can only be assigned to amateurs who hold an advanced qualification.

While contest call signs are assigned for a period of 12 months, contest call signs can only be used during amateur radio contests. Amateur operators must not transmit the contest call sign other than when competing in a contest conducted by a body or organisation (whether or not in Australia) that exists primarily for amateur purposes.

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### **F-series call signs**

The ACMA will no longer assign 4-letter F-series call signs (for example, VK2Faaa) as these are incompatible with some digital modes.

However, holders of previously assigned 4-letter F-series call signs may retain their call signs.

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### **Reserved call signs – international years**

We have also reserved call signs for use by amateur operators to celebrate the designated United Nations international years. Amateur operators will need to apply to use these call signs.

The call signs that have been reserved for this purpose are all 3-letter call signs between VK\$IYA – VK\$IYZ, where \$ is the number listed for the state or territory where the amateur operator is located

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### **Use of prefix VK by overseas amateurs visiting Australia**

The class licence allows overseas visiting amateur operators who hold recognised overseas qualifications to operate amateur stations in Australia for a period of up to 365 days. To do so, appropriately qualified overseas amateur operators must use their overseas call sign, preceded by a prefix with the letters VK.

Amateur operators who are visiting from overseas and staying in Australia for longer than 365 continuous days will need to obtain an Australian qualification and call sign to continue operating in Australia.

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### **Repeater and beacon call signs**

Repeater and beacon call signs are authorised under assigned apparatus licences<sup>10</sup> and usually take the form of VK\$Raa – VK\$Rzz, where \$ is the number listed for the state or territory where the amateur beacon or repeater is located.

Amateur operators can search for available repeater and beacon call signs on the Register of Radiocommunications Licences (RRL), then apply for a call sign when making an application for a repeater or beacon licence. Amateur operators who want to apply for a repeater or beacon licence should contact an accredited person. Further information is available on the ACMA website.

There are no costs associated with the ACMA assigning a repeater or beacon call sign, however, the mandated charges and taxes are payable for the repeater or beacon licence.