



NORTH WALES AMATEUR RADIO GROUP

Guidance for Special Event Stations



Please find below the North Wales Amateur Radio Groups guide to planning and setting up an amateur radio special event station (SES).

What is a special event station?

A SES is a temporary amateur radio station set up to publicise, commemorate, or celebrate an event.

SES Manager

A SES ran by the North Wales Amateur Radio Group will always require that the event is ran by a designated Special Event Station Manager. The SES manager may at his/her discretion ask other members to assist him in planning, setting up and running the SES, however the SES manager will remain responsible for all aspects of the planning, setting up and running the SES and must consider the following;

- Selecting a suitable venue (see below).
- Who is going to transport everything to/from the event?
- Who is going to set everything up/break everything down?
- Who is going to operate, when, on what modes and what bands?
- Who is going to provide refreshments?
- Who is going to look after publicity?
- Who is going to look after health and safety?
- Who is going to complete a EMF check?
- Who is going to look after who needs to be where and when?
- Who is going to look after the logging

Choosing a Venue

Things to bear in mind when selecting a venue include:

- Can you get permission to operate from there?
- Does the owner of the venue fully understand what you will be doing?
- Is the venue big enough for the station to be operated safely whilst there are members of the public floating around?
- Is there space outside the venue to cordon off an area from the public to erect antennas?
- Are there sufficient toilet facilities available?
- Is there sufficient parking available?
- Does the venue have sufficient power to serve your needs? Think of this in terms of actual power, but also number of sockets and distance from the operating position.
- Will the venue be open when you need it to be? Don't forget, you'll need set-up time before the station goes live and break-down time after the station shuts down.
- Will there be tables and chairs available, or will you have to provide your own?
- Can your equipment, or the routing of cables, cause interference to any of the venue's equipment?
- Can you distance your operating stations and antennas from each other to minimise interference to each other?
- How will you route cables out of the building?

Planning the SES

Planning is everything. So before the event make sure that you know:

- What transceivers you will be using, what cables they will need and what adaptors will be required.
- What accessories you will need for the transceivers to power them and enable them to operate the mode you want them to.
- What antennas you will be using, how they will be mounted and supported.
- What scripts, call signs, locations, etc., will need to be programmed in to software and equipment (if applicable).
- How much cable you will need to reach antennas.
- What computers and software you will be using for digital modes and/or logging.
- What furniture will be needed.
- What protection you need; maybe a tent?
- **Which safety items you need – RF burn hazard and trip hazard signs, earth stakes, tape/barriers to keep public away from antennas, cable trunking for when you have no choice to run cables across the floor, etc.**
- Any tools and test equipment needed?
- What publicity materials will need to be produced/obtained.
- What refreshments you will need for your team during the event.

Special Event Callsigns

Special event stations are typically run using special event callsigns that can only be obtained from Ofcom. They are free to apply for and can only be used for short periods of time (max. 28 days in one go). These callsigns all start with a 'GB' prefix and they can only be applied for by full licence holders. It is important that you make applying for the callsign one of your top priorities.

The special event callsign is issued as a Notice of Variation to the applicant's own personal callsign. This means that, whilst any UK amateur radio licence holder can operate a transceiver at the special event station, operation of the station is under the supervision of the NoV holder. **The NOV holder does not need to be present at the event, however a copy of the certificate does need to be available for inspection by ofcom officials and a full license holder also needs to be present at all times that the SES callsign is in use.**

QRZ.COM

A special event station page may be setup on QRZ so that receiving stations can view the details of the event station and so that the club can log all contacts made. Please contact the NWARDG QRZ manager to create an SES page on QRZ allowing at least 7 days notice prior to the event.

Publicising special event stations

There are many ways to publicise a special event station including Radcom, Local Press, Social Media, QRZ.COM etc. Publicising a special event station not only encourages visitors to the event but also encourages amateur radio license holders to make contact with the event station and shortwave listeners to listen out for the clubs transmissions.

Radio Operation

An SES is NOT a free for all for all members to turn up, set up radios, and operate. This not only presents a very unprofessional look and feel to the SES but also puts club and members equipment at a real risk of being seriously damaged. The SES manager is responsible for allocating who is transmitting, on what frequencies and at what times. The SES Manager should produce an operating log or rota so that it is clear to all members who is operating, when, where, and what frequencies etc.

Any members setting up and transmitting without the express agreement of the SES manager will be asked to stop transmitting and may be asked to leave the event.

Prior to the SES

Do not leave it until you turn up on the day to discover that half the equipment doesn't work, isn't compatible with the other half, or isn't fit for purpose. You have to expect there will be problems , so try and circumnavigate them by making sure you...

- Plan a talk at the club to inform members of the SES and its planning.
- Test all the equipment and antennas.
- **Ensure that the NWARDG online Risk Assessment has been completed.**
- **Ensure a EMF assessment has been completed.**
- Everyone knows what they're supposed to be doing.

On the Day

- Set-up and breakdown are where most of the accidents are likely to happen. Do pay attention to the health and safety of the team at all times, and don't forget that of the venue's staff who may be there getting themselves ready for day ahead too.
- Take plenty of photographs but remember, just like visitors to these events aren't keen on looking at the back of people's heads, they don't look terribly inviting on websites, or in magazines either.
- Do keep the place tidy – this isn't your venue and you're not likely to get permission to operate from the venue again if they have to use their own cleaning staff to tidy up after you.
- Ensure that all members are aware who the SES manager is.

After the Event

- Post publicity to Radcom, social media, club website, etc
- Update contacts on QRZ