

Who's in Control of Your Station? N8ARA

About a month or so before Field Day and certain other popular operating events, ARRL is inundated with questions about FCC rules as they apply to Field Day and other operating events. We'll use Field Day in this article, but it is equally applicable in other instances where there are questions on the type of control. **Of course, every station must have a control operator (97.103).** You normally operate your own station, but on Field Day, you often operate using someone else's station. You, the licensee, are responsible for all transmissions from your station. **During Field Day, many amateurs often use a single call sign, so the station licensee must designate a control operator(s). Both the station licensee and the control operator are equally responsible for all transmissions (97.103(a) and (b)). When you, the station licensee, designate others as control operators, you should make a note in the log.** You are no longer required to carry a photocopy of your license whenever you are the control operator of a station, but it's still a good idea. For a detailed look at this topic, see The ARRL FCC Rule Book available from ARRL HQ and Amateur Radio dealers).

Q. My call is being used for Field Day, but I can't be at the station for the duration of the contest. (I like sleeping in my air-conditioned house, even during Field Day.) Do we have to take the transmitter off the air when I am not present?

A. No, because **your appointed control operator or operators should fulfill your duties as the station licensee. In fact, you don't have to be there at all, but you must make sure that your appointed control operator(s) is capable of carrying out your wishes (97.103(b) and 97.105).**

Q. Can KA1UFZ, a Novice, operate the station of N1KB, an Extra Class operator, during Field Day? Can she operate in the Extra Class segment even though she holds a Novice class license?

A. The answer is "yes" to both of these questions, but a control operator must be on duty whenever she operates outside of her Novice class privileges using the call of N1KB. FCC rules state that "A control operator must ensure the immediate proper operation of the station..." (97.105(a)). The rules go on to say, "A station may only be operated in the manner and to the extent permitted by the privileges authorized for the class of operator license held by the control operator" (97.105(b)).

Q. I am an Extra Class licensee, but I am going to use a Novice class operator's station and call sign during Field Day. Can I legally operate her station and use her call outside the Novice subbands?

A. You, the Extra, can be designated as the control operator. If you are authorized by the licensee, you may use the call sign of the Novice class licensee and operate only within the Novice class privileges. However, if an Extra Class control operator wants to operate outside the Novice class operator privileges, he may do so, but he must identify by appending his call to that of the Novice, such as signing "KA1UFZ/N1KB" on CW or separating the calls by the word "stroke" on Phone (97.105(a) and (b), 97.119(d)). True, this is a long identification procedure, but it is the only way to identify

in this case. Why would an Extra want to use a Novice call, you ask. Well, that may not always be the case, but it clearly illustrates the point.

Q. What is the identification procedure for a club station license during Field Day?

A. A club station license carries no operator privileges. The person operating the station must use his or her own privileges. If operation takes place in the Extra class part of the band, a Technician, for example, can use the station, but only if an Extra class **control operator is present at the control point monitoring and supervising the operation.** This does not necessitate the use of the supplementary station ID as mentioned in Section 97.119(e).

Q. Are there any exceptions to the FCC rules for Field Day?

A. No, all FCC rules apply 365 days a year. Of course, Field Day participants must also observe additional Field Day rules as set forth by the ARRL.

Q. During Field Day, members of the public wander through as we operate. Many times, these unlicensed individuals want to operate. Can they legally operate our Field Day station?

A. Only a licensed amateur is eligible to be the control operator, and obviously an unlicensed person can't be the control operator of an amateur station. However they may participate under the direction of a control operator. In cases when a third party is participating, the control operator must be present at the control point and must be continuously monitoring and supervising the third party's participation. Third parties may only communicate directly with countries with which the US has signed third-party agreements (97.115(a) and (b)). The FCC doesn't expect us to carry The FCC Rule Book along on Field Day, but they do expect us all to abide by the rules at all times. It is the hope of the ARRL that everyone will do lots of operating during Field Day, demonstrate Amateur Radio to the public, practice our emergency communications capabilities, eat lots of good Field Day cooking and most of all, have a good time doing it.

Q. During Field Day, there may be DX stations on the air. May they be worked?

A. In most cases, yes. However, if you are only participating as a Third Party under the supervision of a licensed control operator, there must be a signed Third-Party agreement between the DX country's government and the US. The complete list of countries with which the US has Third Party agreements may be found at:

<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/io/3rdparty.html>.

Source: American Radio Relay League, Inc.