



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Mobile Communication Services On Aircraft

Publication of Response to Consultation 07/62

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1 Introduction

Following the completion of the work on Mobile Communication services on Aircraft (MCA Services) in the European Commission¹ and the successful standardisation at the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)²: the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) has published the Response to the Consultation³ on MCA services. Document 08/36 sets out the responses received from the interested parties and details how ComReg will regulate this service.

There were six respondents to the consultation which included the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) Meteor, Vodafone and O2. Other respondents included On-Air (an MCA service provider) and two private individuals.

¹ EC Decision 2008/294/EC, EC Recommendation 2008/295/EC

² ETSI EN 302 408

³ ComReg 07/62

2 Authorisation of MCA services

An MCA system, installed on a commercial aircraft, will permit the use of personal communications equipment during the 'in flight' phase of a journey, in much the same way as mobile phone users can do so on the widely available terrestrial public mobile networks.

It should be noted that the operation of wireless devices on board aircraft and the installation of MCA systems remains subject to airworthiness certification by the relevant authorities (the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and/or the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA)).

ComReg intends to authorise MCA services subject to compliance with the following:

- Each MCA system must comply with the relevant European regulations and technical standards including:
 - EC Decision 2008/294/EC on harmonised conditions of spectrum use for the operation of mobile communication services on aircraft (MCA services) in the Community⁴;
 - ETSI EN 302 480 which is a harmonised European standard for the GSM onboard aircraft system covering the essential requirements of Article 3.2 of the RTTE Directive.
- All operation is subject to EASA and IAA prior and continuing approval and any subsequent rules: in terms of equipment, in-flight operation and the use of mobile terminals (handsets).
- The Licensee must obtain all approvals and licences necessary prior to operating within the jurisdiction of other administrations.
- In the event of a malfunction or other situation operation of the MCA system must be immediately terminated.
- In the event of malfunction the MCA system must be disabled for the remainder of the flight and may not be used again until it is fully certified as being conformant with the EC Decision and otherwise operating correctly.
- ComReg reserves the right to inspect the aircraft and MCA installation at the licensee's own expense prior to and during operation if necessary.

ComReg will also facilitate the use of MCA on aircraft overflying Irish airspace and registered in other jurisdictions on condition that the Administration of that other jurisdiction has fully implemented the relevant European regulations and technical standards as outlined above, and can certify that their installations matches the conditions contained in those documents.

⁴ this refers to the fact that the MCA system may only be used at cruising heights above ground greater than 3000m and operation of the system must be immediately terminated below this level

3 Next Steps

ComReg will shortly issue the relevant Exemption Order to facilitate MCA. Following its publication, providers of MCA services must be in possession of a valid General Authorisation from the country where the aircraft is registered.