

Amateur internet linking systems

Amateur radio operators should be aware that the conditions of their licences also cover the use of an amateur internet linking system (AILS). This fact sheet is a guide to the regulatory requirements applying to AILS.

What is an AILS?

An AILS connects amateur operators in Australia and overseas using the internet. Amateur operators can connect to an AILS through an amateur station or by other means, such as a computer with internet access.

There are many examples of AILS, including iLink and IRLP (Internet Repeater Link Protocol)

What regulatory requirements apply to the use of these systems?

Amateur operators, including those operating an AILS, are personally responsible for the operation of stations under their control or stations to which their amateur licence relates. When connecting to an AILS, they should be aware that they must comply with legislative requirements, including the requirements set out in the:

- *Radiocommunications Act 1992*;
- Radiocommunications Licence Condition (Apparatus Licence) Determination 2003;
- Radiocommunications Licence Conditions (Amateur Licence) Determination No.1 of 1997.

Radiocommunications Act

Amateur licences are apparatus licences, a type of radiocommunications licence. AILS operations, like all amateur activities, must comply with regulatory arrangements established by the ACMA under the Radiocommunications Act, particularly sections 107 and 108, which detail the conditions of apparatus licences. The Radiocommunications Act does not apply if the internet is used to link a computer in Australia with an amateur station in another country and radiocommunications transmissions do not occur in Australia. In these circumstances, the activity is outside the regulatory scope of the ACMA.

Apparatus Licence Determination

The Apparatus Licence Determination applies to all apparatus licences, including amateur licences, and AILS users must comply with its conditions.

Amateur Licence Determination

The Amateur Licence Determination sets out detailed arrangements applying to all amateur licences. Sections 5 and 11 are particularly relevant to AILS operation.

Section 5: Communication by an amateur station

Amateurs are granted certain operating privileges by their amateur licence, which reflects their level of qualification. An AILS must not be used to extend an amateur's operating privileges in Australia or overseas. Licensees of Australian amateur stations linked with other amateur stations are responsible for all transmissions through their station. When linking with stations in overseas countries, third party traffic is permitted only if there is an agreement between Australia and the country involved. Third party traffic is discussed in more detail in the information paper on the [ACMA website](#).

Section 11: Restriction on connection to a public telecommunications network

The interlinking of amateur stations using the internet is not prohibited by section 11 of the Amateur Licence Determination provided **non-amateurs cannot gain access** to the amateur stations involved. When this requirement is satisfied, the internet connection is equivalent to a private line.

AILS users must hold a current amateur licence and communications must be isolated from the general public through the use of software, hardware and operational measures.

AILS approval

The regulatory framework governs actual behaviour 'on air' by amateur operators rather than prospective behaviour. For this reason, the ACMA will not approve a particular AILS for operation on the basis of demonstrations or documentation.

Design flaws, operational limitations and other problems may only become apparent during operation, and may result from the level of experience of the operator, system modifications (such as software or hardware upgrades) or malicious attack ('hacking').

More information

General information about regulatory arrangements that apply to amateur operators is in the ACMA information papers on the [ACMA website](#).

Please note: this document is intended as a guide only and should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases.