STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2026 No. 139

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Wireless Telegraphy (Direct to Device Satellite Communications) (Exemption) Regulations 2026

Made - - - -	*16th February 2026*
Coming into force	*25th February 2026*

The Office of Communications ("OFCOM"), in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 8(3) and 122(7) of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 ("the Act")(**a**), makes the following Regulations.

Before making these Regulations, OFCOM have given notice of their proposal to do so in accordance with section 122(4)(a) of the Act, published notice of their proposal in accordance with section 122(4)(b) of the Act, and have considered the representations made to them before the time specified in the notice in accordance with section 122(4)(c) of the Act.

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Wireless Telegraphy (Direct to Device Satellite Communications) (Exemption) Regulations 2026 and shall come into force on 25th February 2026.

(2) These Regulations shall not extend to the Channel Islands nor to the Isle of Man.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

"associated facility", "electronic communications network" and "electronic communications service" have the meaning given in section 32 of the Communications Act 2003(**b**);

"dBm" means decibels of power referenced to one milliWatt;

"mobile satellite system" means an electronic communications network and associated facilities which is capable of providing radio-communications services between mobile earth stations and one or more space stations; and

"total radiated power" is the integral of the power transmitted in different directions over the entire radiation sphere, measured when the apparatus is transmitting.

Exemption

3.—(1) Except in the situation described in paragraph (3), the establishment, installation and use of wireless telegraphy apparatus for direct to device services is exempt from the provisions of

(**a**) 2006 c. 36.
(**b**) 2003 c. 21.

section 8(1) of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 where the terms, provisions and limitations in regulation 4 are met.

(2) Direct to device services are wireless electronic communications services provided by an undertaking operating a mobile satellite system to enable terrestrial users of electronic communications to send and receive radio signals directly to and from a space station.

(3) The situation referred to in paragraph (1) is where the wireless telegraphy apparatus is (or forms part of) a commercial multi-user gateway device.

(4) A commercial multi-user gateway device is a device utilising more than one SIM card and onto which telephone voice calls or SMS messages for more than one end user are (or could be) diverted for onward wireless transmission utilising one (or more than one) of the SIM cards associated with the device.

Terms, provisions and limitations

4.—(1) The terms, provisions and limitations are those in paragraphs (2) to (9).

(2) The wireless telegraphy apparatus must not cause or contribute to any undue interference to any wireless telegraphy.

(3) The use of the wireless telegraphy apparatus must not be airborne.

(4) The wireless telegraphy apparatus must (when transmitting and receiving radio signals to and from a space station) only operate on radio frequencies within the frequency bands listed in paragraph (5).

(5) The frequency bands are—

(a) 1710.1-1715.9 Megahertz; and

(b) 1805.1-1810.9 Megahertz.

(6) The wireless telegraphy apparatus must (when transmitting and receiving radio signals to and from a space station) only operate using one (or more than one) of the standards listed in paragraph (7), which are published by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute(**a**).

(7) The standards are—

(a) the GSM standard with reference EN 301 511 V12.5.1;

(b) the UMTS standards with references—

(i) EN 301 908–1 V15.2.1; and

(ii) EN 301 908–2 V13.1.1;

(c) the LTE standards with references—

(i) EN 301 908–1 V15.2.1; and

(ii) EN 301 908–13 V13.2.1; and

(d) the 5G new radio (NR) standards with references—

(i) EN 301 908–1 V15.2.1; and

(ii) EN 301 908–25 V15.1.1.

(8) When transmitting using the GSM standard the mean power must not exceed 30 dBm total radiated power.

(9) When transmitting using the UMTS standards, the LTE standards or the 5G new radio standard the mean power must not exceed 25 dBm total radiated power.

David Willis
Group Director, Spectrum Group
16th February 2026 For and on behalf of the Office of Communications

(**a**) The standards are published by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and are available at https://www.etsi.org/.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations set out the circumstances in which wireless telegraphy apparatus (including mobile phones) which are established, installed or used for direct to device services will be exempt from the requirement to be licensed under section 8(1) of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006.

Regulation 3(2) describes direct to device services for the purposes of these Regulations.

Regulations 3(1) and 3(3) provide that the exemption will not apply where the wireless telegraphy apparatus is (or forms part of) a commercial multi-user gateway device. Regulation 3(4) describes what a commercial multi-user gateway device is.

Regulation 4(1) sets out terms, provisions and limitations to which the exemption is subject. In particular, Regulation 4(5) sets out the radio frequency bands on which the wireless telegraphy apparatus must be operated (for direct to device services).

Regulations 4(7) lists the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) published standards with which the wireless telegraphy apparatus must operate, as required by regulation 4(6). These standards are available online from the ETSI website at https://www.etsi.org/. ETSI has published different versions of these standards and regulation 4(7) references the specific version to be complied with for the purposes of these Regulations.

Regulations 4(8) and 4(9) set out the power transmission limitations that must not be exceeded by the wireless telegraphy apparatus.

A full regulatory impact assessment of the effect of these Regulations is available on OFCOM's website at www.ofcom.org.uk. Hard copies of this assessment can be obtained free of charge by writing to OFCOM at Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 9HA (tel. 020 7981 3000). Copies of this assessment have also been placed in the library of both Houses of Parliament.

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£6.40

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/uksi/2026/139

ISBN 978-0-34-827956-6

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