

In PR Docket 93-305, the Federal Communications Commission reserved the block of call signs having the rarest of all formats the 750 one-by-one call signs for temporary use by amateur radio stations during events that are of **special significance to the amateur service community**.

A special event call sign aids amateur operators in calling attention "on-air" to their participation in the event as well as helping to bring public notice to the event. Examples of the use of one-by-one call signs by amateur stations include a wide variety of events such as conventions, festivals, dedications and anniversaries.

A one-by-one call sign consists of a single prefix letter (K, N, or W), the region number (0 to 9), and a single suffix letter (A to Z, except the letter X). There are 750 such call signs. The FCC rules (Section 2.302) do not permit the assignment of one-by-one amateur station call signs containing the suffix letter X.

Original Notice of Proposed Rule Making

On April 25, 1995, the FCC addressed the matter of a special event vanity call sign system in Docket No. WT 95-57. The initial proposal was that the special event call sign system would be administered by the Commission. Under this approach, the licensee making the request, at least 120 days prior to the event, would be required to indicate the nature of the event and would have to certify that it is of special significance to the amateur service community.

In addition, the licensee was to submit a list of one-by-one format call signs, in order of preference. The first assignable call sign on the list would be stamped "granted" and a copy of the list would be returned to the person making the request. The special event vanity call sign could be used for a period not to exceed that of the special event, or for 15 days, whichever is less. The FCC asked for comments on the proposed special event vanity call sign system. The public comment period closed on July 14, 1995, reply comments a month later.

FCC issues Report and Order

On March 20, 1997, the Commission adopted an Order which looked toward implementing a Special Event Call Sign System. There was no consensus in the comments as to the nature and

types of special events that the amateur service community considers warranting the use of one-by-one call signs.

In the Order, the FCC said Although the comments do not provide the licensing criteria that would be needed for us to administer a special call sign system, the numerous and varied requests that we have received for call signs from the one-by-one format block indicate that there is a widespread demand for some type of special event call sign system. Moreover, we believe that a special event call sign system can be best utilized in a self-administered fashion. We are amending our rules, therefore, to authorize the licensee of an amateur station operating in conjunction with a self-determined special event to substitute for its assigned call sign a self-selected call sign from the block of one-by-one call signs. The station must also announce its assigned call sign at least once each hour during such operation so that listeners can determine the identity of its licensee.

The Commission also observed that ...the amateur service community provides on-line license data base information through the Internet. We are confident this experience can be used to coordinate the short-term use of special event call signs. The rules adopted herein, therefore, delegate authority to the Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau to certify volunteer entities to serve as amateur station special event call sign data base coordinators.

Such entities would coordinate, maintain and disseminate a common online data base for the block of special event call signs. Special event call sign coordinators will be selected on the basis of their ability to coordinate, maintain and disseminate worldwide a common online data base. This amendment will serve our amateur service licensees by simplifying and improving the efficiency of our licensing process.

The operation of a special event station does not require additional skill. Nor does a special event call sign authorize any operating privileges. It simply allows an already-licensed station to temporarily use a different call sign in the identification announcement that helps attract greater attention to the on-air presence of the station.