



Institute of Advanced Motorists

Radio Skills Guidance for Groups

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I. Introduction

1. About this Document

This document, **IAM Radio Skills Guidance for Groups** is part of the information published to Groups under the Radio Skills project.

This document is prepared to offer advice that is likely to be appropriate for the early stages of the project – around the initial launch period and thereafter until the use of radios is established within the Groups.

It is intended to offer advice that is practical and pragmatic but may not be necessary once the project is established, and may evolve as the project develops

As the project matures so the advice within this document will develop to reflect those changes.

2. About the Radio Skills Competency Framework

It is recognised that a number of Groups and their Observers use radios on their Observed Rides. Because radios are not fully available and their usage is not standard throughout all motorcycle Groups, the use of radios cannot currently be made a requirement of the IAM Observer Qualification and Assessment standards under the IMI Awards quality assurance. The Radio Skills Competency Framework therefore stands alone, but in parallel to that system.

The Competency Framework exists to share good practice across all Groups, to assist all radio users to achieve consistent standards. In particular this framework seeks to enable those Groups and Observers who are not currently using radios to acquire the knowledge and skills to begin to use radios.

3. Documentation

The Radio Skills are defined within several documents.

IAM Radio Skills Competency Framework is the formal definition of the standard and the requirements that Examiners or Assessors will be testing. The Levels of Qualification, Competencies and Performance standards for radio usage are defined within the Radio Skills Competency Framework.

The Competency Framework is further explained in the Radio Skills Guidance for Observers and Radio Skills Guidance for Groups.

IAM Radio Skills Guidance for Observers explains the standard in more detail and will assist IAM Observers to acquire and manage their skills for using radios.

It is also a handbook of good practice notes, hints and tips; a training record and a note book for use whilst training to use radios

IAM Radio Skills Checklist is a 'one page' quick reference guide for Observers, trainers and Assessors.

Available documentation will be published primarily through the IAM website. Some documentation may also be available pre- printed in an agreed format.

II. Radio Skills - Guidance for Groups

1. Objectives

The main objective of this project is to assist those Groups and Observers to use radios, to help them to acquire those skills. It will also assist in sharing good practice between Groups.

Radio Skills are not part of the IMI Awards Observer Qualification and Assessment standards framework, but are aligned with it. Radio skills are a voluntary, additional skill set.

The Radio Skills project will also assist all groups to align with a common standard.

2. The Benefits of Radio use

The IAM recognises the value that radio skills can bring to training. Experience, reported by both Observers and Associates indicates that training is more efficient, leading to quicker learning and potentially shorter training cycles and more effective use of Observer's time.

3. Structure of the Competency Framework

The Radio Skills Competency Framework consists of:

- 3 Levels of qualification:
 - Level 1 Giving route directions only
 - Level 2 Giving route directions and an Observer's commentary
 - Level 3 Giving guidance on the move.

The particular level of qualification to be achieved is selected by the Observer according to their skills and expected use of radios.

- Level 1 radio qualified

Level 1 covers knowledge of the radio equipment, its assembly and care, operation of the equipment, the briefing of the Associate if radios are to be used and the giving of route directions. See Competency Groups A to C.

This enables the Observer to gain the advantages of greater control of the Observed Ride and enables the Associate to focus on the road ahead.

- Level 2 radio qualified

Level 2 qualifies the Observer to deliver a Commentary on their own ride whilst leading the Associate.

It enables Observers to demonstrate riding to an Associate and to explain to the Associate what they are doing and why, whilst they are doing it.

- Level 3 radio qualified

Level 3 qualifies the Observer to give a Commentary whilst 'following' the Associate, and then to offer 'Guidance on the Move' to the Associate.

This level allows the Observer to offer 'Guidance' which is immediate and not constrained by the need to wait for a 'stop and debrief' - it is live and instant!

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- Not radio qualified

The Observer elects not to use radios and, or is not qualified to use radios. The Observer will use arm signals and indicators to control the Observed Ride.

Level 1 enables Observers to get real advantage from radios by giving route directions. Significantly, it does not require those who don't want to give Commentary to be excluded from using radios.

Level 2 allows a 'Demonstration Ride with Commentary'. Commentary is very powerful and probably makes the greatest immediate impact for the Associate. Commentary skills need specific training and practice in addition to the skills for giving Directions.

Level 3 'Guidance on the Move' introduces the additional skills of Commentary from a 'Following' position and 'Guidance on the Move'. 'Guidance' may involve well timed feedback given by radios, including suggestions and skills advice for the Associate to consider during the ride.

4. Group Insurance

The take-up of the use of radios within IAM Groups has been constrained by the perceived restrictions of the IAM Group insurance.

Previously, the advice was to avoid any messaging or communication to the Associate that could interfere with their concentration, distract them or be interpreted as an instruction to take a specific action.

The interpretation of the IAM Insurance for Observers and Observed Rides has been clarified and the use of radios by Group trained and qualified Observers is covered.

IAM Insurance for Group Observed Rides covers a qualified Observer to use radios for route directions at Level 1, for 'Commentary' at level 2 and 'Guidance on the Move' at level 3.

It also covers radio qualified Observers for use of radios for Group social rides.

5. New addition skills at level 3

The interpretation of the insurance policy has created an opportunity for experienced Observers who are currently using radios to extend their skills.

Level 3 enables Observers to use radios to give 'Guidance on the Move', once they have qualified at level 3.

Level 3 includes:

- Commentary from a 'following' position
- Guidance on the Move

Level 3 goes beyond the usual established practice, although it is quite possible that Observers may have been using these skills already, privately or unofficially.

Within 'car' groups Observers and Associates will be familiar with the skills of giving commentary whilst on the move. Motorcycle Observers will now be able to offer guidance whilst on the move, as a car Observer would. These capabilities are now available to qualified motorcycle Observers and their Associates who elect to use radios.

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6. Terminology

For clarity, the Competency Framework refers to 'Guidance on the Move'. This phrase is to be used instead of 'Instruction'.

'Guidance on the Move' is offered on the Associate's performance, whereas a 'Commentary' is typically given on the Observer's own ride.

'Guidance' may involve well timed feedback given by radios, including suggestions and skills advice for the Associate to consider during the ride. More detailed guidance, feedback and discussion should be undertaken whilst stationary at an appropriate stopping point.

7. Training for Radio use

Training for using radios is organised and delivered locally, by local Groups. Groups can train their Radio Skilled Observers at level 1, level 2, or level 3.

Observers who are not radio qualified should not use radios (except when receiving training under supervision from an Observer qualified to use radios at that level).

The Assessment of an Observer against the Radio Skills Competency Framework is also undertaken within local Groups, much as Local (or Group) Observer training and Assessment has been done to date.

8. Setting up your Group Radio Skills project

These documents are intended to help Groups to set up their local radio skills training.

Groups may want to consider appointing an individual or team to specialise in the training delivery and Assessment of radio skills within the Group.

Support for the setting up and training of these teams may also be available through other local Groups, regional coordinators, regional training teams, regional training events and through support from IAM House in Chiswick. More details will be available at a later date.

9. Grandfather's Rights

In order to begin the radio skills training and Assessment within a Group it is suggested that those Observers who are already skilled in the use of radio could be qualified by 'Grandfather's Rights'. This would be awarded by the Group, at the appropriate level as part of an implementation phase as the Group develops their training and Assessment processes.

The granting of 'Grandfather's Rights' to Observers who are existing users and experienced in the use of radios will be allowed for a limited period, after which all Observers wishing to use radios will have to pass a Group administered training and Assessment process at their chosen level.

Experienced radio skilled Observers should expect to qualify through 'Grandfather's Rights' at Level 2.

Existing users, qualified under 'Grandfather's Rights' can continue to operate at that level within their local Group subject to working within the radio competency standards.

'Grandfather's Rights' will expire on 31 December 2014.

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From 1 Jan 2015 all continuing radio users must have been through their local Group's training and Assessment process.

Ideally until this date, Observers leading a Group's Radio Skill project and those who have been 'Grandfathered' their qualification should seek confirmation that their skills and process are in alignment with the Radio Skills Competency Framework.

10. Record keeping

Records should be maintained by Groups of the radio qualifications obtained by its Observers and the level at which they are qualified.

Individual Observers and those training for radio skills qualification can record their training and qualification in the Radio Skills Guidance for Observers handbook and Training Record.

The IAM will also maintain records of the radio skills when Observer's use radios for their National Observer test.

11. Assessment

Assessment is undertaken within the local Group.

The radio skills Assessment is a 'once only' assessment and once the standard for a particular level has been achieved, it is awarded indefinitely. There is no necessity for periodic retesting.

Local Groups should identify a suitably experienced Observer(s) to undertake the Assessment of their Observers' radio skills.

It would be appropriate if the Group's locally appointed Radio Assessor and its lead Radio Skills trainers had received some external training. The provision of training events is being considered, and further details will be available in due course.

The Assessment process may, in due course, be subject to external, independent Verification to ensure that consistent Quality Standards are maintained.

12. IMI Awards Observer Assessment

Observers applying for an IMI Awards local or National Observer qualification may elect to use radios, or not.

If radios are used on an Observer test then the Examiner for the National Observer Test, and the local Assessor for the Local Observer Assessment will expect that radios are used according to the Radio Skills Competency Framework and Associated guidance.

Consideration is being given to making it a requirement that a locally qualified Radio Skilled Observer should use radios (at the level of their locally awarded qualification) whilst taking an Observer Test or Assessment. This has yet to be concluded, but Observers should be encouraged to take the Observer Test or Assessment using radios, at their appropriate level, if they have passed a local assessment.

13. Radio Equipment considerations

This radio project deliberately does not include discussion of the many complexities and varieties of radio equipment available to Groups. Such technical issues must be for local Groups and individual Observers and users to resolve.

However, some experience would suggest a few broad recommendations for Groups and Observers to consider.

- Keep it simple
- Because of the wide variety of equipment available it is worth ensuring that any equipment used / obtained by the Group is easily compatible
- Consideration could be given by a Group to fund, in full or in part the purchase of radio equipment
- Consider the options for external funding
- Some Observers and Associates may already have their own radio equipment, some may prefer to use or provide their own equipment.
- Inevitably equipment will become damaged so consider if a budget should be allowed for the provision of spares and replacements

All IAM Groups using radios should ensure that their equipment is safe and legal.