

from ARRL:

Mexico Not Yet Extending Operating Permission to Non-Mexican Radio Amateurs

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Broad changes in Mexico's radiocommunication regulatory environment 2 years ago continue to hinder Amateur Radio licensing there and still do not provide reciprocal permission for non-Mexican radio amateurs to operate South of the Border. Mexico's International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) member society the Federation of Mexican Radio Amateurs (FMRE) has been working with the new regulator, the Federal Telecommunications Institute (IFT) to craft more Amateur Radio-friendly licensing procedures and regulations, and there has been a little positive movement. The new regulatory regime considers the radio spectrum as an exploitable resource, and all former Amateur Radio regulations have been deemed null and void. To help acquaint regulators with the nuances of Amateur Radio, all IFT administrative staff completed the United States Telecommunications Training Institute (USTTI) Amateur Radio Administration Course last February, and this has yielded some positive results.

FMRE's new president, Alfonso "Poncho" Tamez, XE2O — the son of a radio amateur and a DXer — is spearheading the society's negotiations with the IFT. At FMRE's National Convention in September, IFT Commissioner Adriana Labardini announced to loud cheers that her agency will get Amateur Radio licensing going again, after a 2-year delay. FMRE has estimated that of the 3,500 existing Mexican Amateur Radio licenses in place before the new law went into effect, more than 1,000 have expired and their renewal put on hold until the IFT works procedural details. She said the IFT expects to process more than 800 applications by year's end, with another batch of more than 1,400 to follow. An initial license will cost about \$30 US. One fly in the ointment: Amateurs must physically sign their "concession" at IFT when it's granted, but Mexico City is currently the only place they can do so. The status of Amateur Radio clubs also has been put in limbo by the new regulatory regime.

A revised IFT draft of Amateur Radio licensing procedures included specific provisions to grant Amateur Radio operating permission and to make licensing requirements more consistent with the nature of the Amateur Radio Service. But significant gaps still exist. At this point, it is not even necessary to take an examination to obtain an Amateur Radio license — called a "concession" — in Mexico.

While the IFT has not yet determined what to do about foreign radio amateurs wishing to operate in Mexico, the agency has received 45 petitions to do so and is considering how it can issue permits; a foreigner cannot obtain a license under the new law, but may be given permission to operate as XE#/<home call sign>. Further, no regulations are in place regarding power output, license classes, licensing zones, interference, and other regulatory aspects.

IARU Region 2 Area C Vice President Ramón Santoyo, XE1KK, said a week doesn't go by in which Region 2 doesn't receive a request for help in obtaining a reciprocal license. On the other hand, Santoyo said, under the new rules, radio amateurs may loan their license to anyone, as long as operation will be within accepted parameters. "Therefore, it seems that the only way for a foreign amateur to operate is through a

borrowed call sign,” Santoyo said. He said IARU Region 2 gave the IFT a copy, in Spanish, of the ITU *Handbook of Amateur Radio and Amateur Radio Services*, hoping to point up the problems in the new legislation.

“There is plenty to do to correct these legal aberrations,” Santoyo concluded, “but in the process we have seen that while amateurs are highly respected and beloved, we compete for the attention of a regulator and Congress with the big industry players, which in this world of economic interests, makes it hard to keep their attention in taking care of us.” Santoyo told ARRL that nothing had changed as of this week.