

Overview of The Bahamas



- The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is comprised of 700 islands and cays but only 30 are inhabited.
- The archipelago of island spans 5,358 square miles from southeast of Florida to the northeast of Cuba.
- The population of The Bahamas is 360,000
- 90% of the population reside on four islands including New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco and Eleuthera.



Regulatory Framework




The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) is the regulatory authority for the electronic communications sector (ECS) in The Bahamas.

The sector is comprise of:

- Fixed and mobile telephone services
- Fixed and mobile broadband services
- Radio and television broadcasting services
- Spectrum and Numbering resources

URCA's decisions are informed by a newly established legal framework.




Legal Framework

The legal framework was established with the passage of three (3) core pieces of legislation:

- The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) Act, 2009
- The Communications Act, 2009
- The Utilities Appeal Tribunal (UAT) Act, 2009.

Consistent with these legislation, URCA has developed a conformity and interoperability regime , which is outlines in its:

Guidelines for Type Approval of Low Power Devices




Guidelines for Type Approvals

The Guideline for Type Approvals are informed by Section 17 of the Communications Act, which established that certain category of persons using radio spectrum may be exempt from the licensing requirements provided that —

- *The associated equipment does not or is unlikely to cause significant interference to networks or carriage services operated or provided by a licensee;*
- *The risk of harm or inconvenience to other users is outweighed by the benefits to the public from permitting usage on an unlicensed basis; and*
- *Such exemption would be compatible with relevant international recommendations and standards.*

URCA's guidelines also specifies who can apply for a type approval.

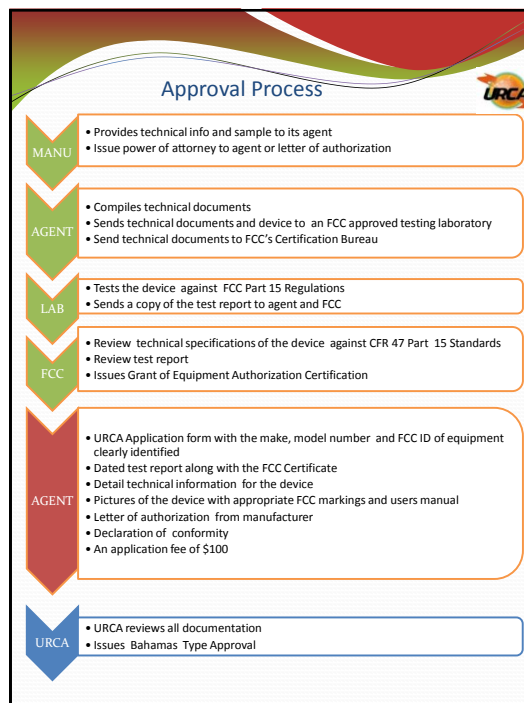
Who can apply for a Type Approval?




An applicant for Type Approval can be made by:

- The manufacturer/producer, dealer or importer of a Low Power Device, or a duly authorized agent acting on behalf of the manufacturer.
- The manufacturer or producer of a Low Power Device is not required to have a presence in The Bahamas in order to apply for Type Approval.

The process for obtaining type approval in The Bahamas is streamline to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.






Requirements for Type Approval

URCA's C&I regime aims to ensure compatibility of Low Power Devices with both licensed and license exempt electronic communications systems operating legally in The Bahamas.

- A Low Power Device that meets **the FCC's CFR 47 Part 15** technical and safety requirements may be issued with a Type Approval Certificate

In URCA's view conformity to those standards provide evidence that:

- The device is designed for efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum and avoid harmful interference with no degradation of service to other users of the spectrum;
- The device conforms to health and safety standards and does not cause harm to the user or other individuals; and
- The electromagnetic emissions does not disrupt the operation of equipment operating nearby.




Technical Information

An application of the type approval of a device must be supported by:


- Technical/operational documentation including a brief explanation describing how the device is intended to be used;
- Identification of any radio interfaces, antennas or connection points for antennas and radio spectrum range EIRP power;
- Any software or firmware which may affect compliance or have an effect on radio frequency emissions;
- The description shall give sufficient information on the equipment in the event the equipment is an interface card or module for installation in host equipment;
- Circuit diagrams, printed circuit board (PCB) layouts, parts list and other design and construction information; and
- Photographs or illustrations in sufficient detail showing external features and internal layout.

The device for Type Approval must also bear the same make and model number indicated on the test report.



Declaration of Conformity


A declaration of conformity must be issued by the manufacturer of the device on company letterhead or company stationery and signed by an authorised representative of that company, confirming that the device complies with the relevant standards (e.g., radio, health and safety, EMC, etc.).



Marks of Conformity

Low Power Devices entering The Bahamas must be clearly marked showing the following information:


- The manufacturer's Name;
- Model, Type Number;
- Serial Number; and
- Approval Number (i.e., the FCC's Equipment Grant identifier).



Revocation of Type Approval


The Type Approval shall be revoked in the following instances:

- The low power device has been modified without URCA's consent;
- A policy change is made that render the device incompliant with the relevant standards
- The Low Power Devices is being used in such a way so as to permit or enable the establishment and operation of a broadcast radio or television station.
- The device causes harmful interference to other licensed electronic communication systems



Fees

URCA may on receipt of an application for Type Approval, request charges for particular services rendered by URCA in the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers, such fees are published annually in URCA's Fee Schedule.



Duration of the Type Approval

The validity period of the Type Approval is for the life of the Low Power Device provided the Type Approval is not revoked as in s.2.6 or surrendered by the applicant.

Future Plans

Future plans include:

- Engaging the relevant parties in a discussion about further the development of the C&I regime in The Bahamas.
- Developing the technical and managerial competencies needed to promote efficiency

