

Beware the illegal two-way radio

Two-way radios (also known as walkie talkies) are easily bought online but some overseas models are illegal in New Zealand.

Illegal radios are often cheap and typically sold by overseas retailers with a package of pre-programmed frequencies or fully programmable options. For example radio brand names such as Baofeng, Pofung and Wouxun are in most cases illegal to own or operate. These radios do not meet the required technical standards and can be easily programmed to operate on channels which the public are not authorised to use. There have been examples of these radios being used on emergency services and public safety communication channels which can have very serious consequences.

▶ What happens if I'm caught?

In October 2018, the Radiocommunications Regulations (Prohibited Equipment – Unrestricted Two Way Radio) Notice 2018 was introduced to prohibit the import, sale, and distribution of unrestricted two-way radio equipment, other than by a permitted person. Breaching these regulations could lead to prosecution and fines of up to \$200,000.

▶ Where can I find more information?

Radio Spectrum Management Website <https://www.rsm.govt.nz/>
By phone: In New Zealand, call us on **0508 RSM INFO** (0508 776 463)
From overseas, call **+64 3 962 2603**
By Email: info@rsm.govt.nz Service centre

▶ How can I avoid buying an illegal two-way radio?

▶ Look for the New Zealand Compliance mark:

Before a New Zealand supplier can sell a two-way radio, they must meet a range of compliance requirements, including correct labelling and ensuring the device complies with Radio Spectrum Management mandated technical standards. The New Zealand compliance mark **R-NZ** tells the buyer that this radio complies and can operate safely in New Zealand.

▶ Make sure you have the right radio communications licence:

You can't operate a two-way radio without an appropriate radio licence, so check you understand and meet your radio licensing requirements.

▶ Buy a Citizen Band (CB) or PRS radio:

You can own and operate a Citizen Band (CB) radio (also known as personal radio service or PRS) and communicate with other people over short distances without the need to get a licence in your own name or pay licence fees.

