

I am an amateur radio operator. As a result, I have been part of a Search and Rescue group in British Columbia for over 30 years.

From my activities in both fields, I know that radios for use on commercial frequencies must be “type approved” for licencing in Canada. This process makes them expensive, because the manufacturer has the expense of going through the approval process. In the past, this was needed to ensure that commercial radio equipment was of high quality.

With today’s technology and manufacturing methods, it is my opinion that all amateur radio equipment is made to the same exacting standards as far as power output, frequency control, etc. is concerned.

It seems unfortunate that volunteer search and rescue organizations, to have radios that can be used on the assigned bands, must purchase hand-held radios that cost in the neighbourhood of \$800 each, when amateur equipment that would do the job equally well, is available for perhaps \$100.

A related topic is the use of radio equipment on industrial roads in BC, and perhaps in other jurisdictions. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, in the recent past, developed a series of 35 radio channels for communication on logging and similar roads, which are now used throughout British Columbia. Their purpose is to enable people travelling on the roads to communicate their positions and directions of travel to each other, preventing serious accidents. The move to a standard set of channels has been wonderful, but again the cost of commercial radios that can be used is high. As a result, local ranchers, hunters, and tourists using the backcountry roads do not have radios, so run the risk of meeting a loaded logging truck on a blind corner.

If it were possible for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to set the standards needed for radios, then expect manufacturers to meet those standards for any radios advertised for such use, without having to specifically “type approve” each model, it would be a great benefit to the general population. A member of the public, when applying for a radio licence, should be required to state the make and model of equipment being used, but not more than that. I suggest that spot checking a manufacturer’s product periodically would suffice to oversee the quality requirements.

Yours,

Hal Giles