

UHF operating restrictions in the State of New Mexico

March 4, 2016

Operation on the 420MHz to 450MHz band in the entire state of NM is limited to 50 Watts PEP output. You may use any gain antenna though. You are right, that doesn't make much sense. Operation on 902MHz is forbidden entirely in the southern part of the state, and restricted to 50 Watts PEP or less in those areas 150 miles from White Sands Missile Range boundaries. The specific regulation is contained in:

FCC Online Table of Frequency Allocations 47 C.F.R. § 2.106,
<<https://transition.fcc.gov/oet/spectrum/table/fcctable.pdf> >
Footnotes US270 and US275.

These footnotes are reproduced below. The FCC frequency allocation document gets updated every 6 months; the latest version is dated March 4, 2016 and we will update this document if there are any changes. The restrictions are found in other Federal documents, including FCC Part 97 and in NTIA frequency allocation documents, but those are generally not updated as frequently as the FCC table.

There is some confusion among NM UHF operators as to the rule. Up until about 10 years ago, the northern limit stopped at 34 degrees N latitude, and many are still following that incorrect guidance. That confusion was fueled by a map showing the old restrictions that was prominently featured on the FCC web site for many years after the restrictions were changed to encompass the entire state.

There are provisions for exemptions to be granted. The process requires approval from the FCC Chief engineer for the district, which is in Colorado Springs for NM, and from the frequency coordinators of all the military bases in NM. No one I know of has attempted to get an exemption and given the multitude of officials who need to give approval, it seems unlikely to me that this process would go smoothly.

Here are the pertinent excerpts from the FCC table of allocations:

US270 *In the band 420-450 MHz, the following provisions shall apply to the amateur service:*

(a) The peak envelope power of an amateur station shall not exceed 50 watts in the following areas, unless expressly authorized by the FCC after mutual agreement, on a case-by-case basis, between the Regional Director of the applicable field office and the military area frequency coordinator at the applicable military base. For areas (5) through

(7), the appropriate military coordinator is located at Peterson AFB, CO.

(1) Arizona, Florida and New Mexico.

(2) Within those portions of California and Nevada that are south of latitude 37° 10' N.

(3) Within that portion of Texas that is west of longitude 104° W.

(4) Within 322 km of Eglin AFB, FL (30° 30' N, 86° 30' W); Patrick AFB, FL (28° 21' N, 80° 43'

W); and the Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, CA (34° 09' N, 119° 11' W).

(5) Within 240 km of Beale AFB, CA (39° 08' N, 121° 26' W).

(6) Within 200 km of Goodfellow AFB, TX (31° 25' N, 100° 24' W) and Warner Robins AFB, GA (32° 38' N, 83° 35' W).

(7) Within 160 km of Clear AFS, AK (64° 17' N, 149° 10' W); Concrete, ND (48° 43' N, 97° 54' W); and Otis AFB, MA (41° 45' N, 70° 32' W).

(b) In the sub-band 420-430 MHz, the amateur service is not allocated north of Line A (def. § 2.1).

US275 The band 902-928 MHz is allocated on a secondary basis to the amateur service subject to not causing harmful interference to the operations of Federal stations authorized in this band or to Location and Monitoring Service (LMS) systems. Stations in the amateur service must tolerate any interference from the operations of industrial, scientific, and medical (ISM) devices, LMS systems, and the operations of Federal stations authorized in this band. Further, the amateur service is prohibited in those portions of Texas and New Mexico bounded on the south by latitude 31° 41' North, on the east by longitude 104° 11' West, and on the north by latitude 34° 30' North, and on the west by longitude 107° 30' West; in addition, outside this area but within 150 miles of these boundaries of White Sands Missile Range the service is restricted to a maximum transmitter peak envelope power output of 50 watts.