

ARRL International DX Contest Rules

Introduction and How to Operate

Contest Objective: To encourage W/VE stations to expand knowledge of DX propagation on the HF and MF bands, improve operating skills, and improve station capability by creating a competition in which DX stations may only contact W/VE stations. One contest period is CW-only and one is Phone-only.

Your [ARRL membership](#) helps support the ARRL Contest Program – the world’s largest with many different events from HF through microwave. Along with your membership, you’ll get free access to the National Contest Journal, the ARRL’s online archive of QST articles, and the Technical Information Service. Contesting builds skills and understanding – come join the fun!

Contest Period: (All dates are maintained in the [ARRL contest calendar](#)):

CW: Third full weekend in February

Phone: First full weekend in March

Contest Period: Begins 0000 UTC Saturday and runs through 2359 UTC Sunday.

Log Deadline: Upload your log at contest-log-submission.arrl.org no later than **SEVEN (7)** days after the contest is over at 2359 UTC. Paper log forms are available on the [ARRL DX Contest](#) web page.

Bands and Modes: Use only the 1.8, 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz bands. Use only CW during the CW weekend and Phone during the Phone weekend.

Categories: Single Operator and Single Operator Unlimited entrants in any power category can also enter as All Band or Single Band. Multioperator stations may only enter as All Band. See the Special Rules and HF Categories sections for details.

Contacts: W/VE stations may only contact DX stations. DX stations may only contact W/VE stations. Hawaii (KH6), Alaska (KL7), St. Paul Is. (CY9), and Sable Is. (CYØ) stations participate as DX stations. Contact stations only once per band.

Exchange: W/VE stations send a signal report and their state or province. (See the [ARRL Contest Multipliers List](#) for a list of abbreviations.) DX stations send a signal report and power as a number or abbreviation.

This is a typical contest contact:

CQing Station: CQ test from W9JJ

Answering Station: RU1A

CQer: DAØHQ 59 Connecticut

Answer: 59 KW

CQer: Thanks, CQ test from W9JJ

Or

CQing Station: CQ TEST DE JA3YBK
Answering Station: N2IC
CQer: N2IC 599 500
Answer: 599 NM
CQer: TU JA3YBK

As the answering station, it is not necessary to send the CQing station's call before the exchange unless you think there might be some confusion about which station you are responding to.

Scoring: Each contact counts for three (3) QSO points. W/VE stations multiply total QSO points by the number of DXCC entities contacted. DX stations multiply total QSO points by the total of US States and Canadian Provinces and Territories plus the District of Columbia (DC) and Labrador (LB) contacted. Each multiplier counts once per band.

Club Competition: You can contribute your score to your ARRL Affiliated Club by selecting the club name when you upload your log. Club Competition rules are available here: [Affiliated Club Competition Rules](#).

Feedback about the contest:

Send us your stories and photos! Tell us what fun you had, how you did, and what challenges you faced at the ARRL Contest Program's "[Soapbox](#)" page.

Additional Resources:

[DXCC Entities List](#)

All contest queries should be directed to contests@arrl.org or 860-594-0232.

Special ARRL DX Rules

1. Operating Period: 0000 UTC Saturday through 2359 UTC Sunday.
 - 1.1 There are no operating time restrictions in any category.
2. Contacts
 - 2.1 Use only the 1.8, 3.5, 7, 14, 21, and 28 MHz bands.
 - 2.2 Contact each station only once per band.
 - 2.3 W/VE stations may only contact DX stations. DX stations may only contact W/VE stations. Hawaii (KH6), Alaska (KL7), St. Paul Is. (CY9), and Sable Is. (CYØ) stations participate as DX stations.
 - 2.4 Contacts count for contest credit only on CW during the CW weekend and only on Phone during the Phone weekend.
3. Categories
 - 3.1 See the HF Categories section for power sub-categories.
 - 3.2 Single Operator: All Band and Single Band
 - 3.3 Single Operator Unlimited: All Band
 - 3.4 Multioperator: Single Transmitter, Two Transmitter, and Multi-Transmitter
4. Contest Exchange - the required exchange consists of:
 - 4.1 Signal report
 - 4.2 Location or Power
 - 4.2.1 W/VE stations send a signal report and their state or province. (See the [ARRL Contest Multipliers List](#) for a list of abbreviations.)
 - 4.2.2 DX stations send a signal report and power as a number or abbreviation.
5. Scoring
 - 5.1 QSO points: Each contact counts for three (3) points.
 - 5.2 Multipliers:
 - 5.2.1 Multipliers count once per band.
 - 5.2.2 W/VE stations count DXCC entities (except USA and Canada)
 - 5.2.3 DX stations count US States, the District of Columbia (DC), and Canadian Provinces and Territories plus Labrador (LB). (See the [ARRL Contest Multipliers List](#).) Note - although VO1 and VO2 are officially a single province, they are counted separately in this contest by reason of tradition.
 - 5.2.3.1 Hawaii (KH6) and Alaska (KL7) count as DXCC entities.
 - 5.3 Final score equals the total QSO points times the total multipliers contacted.
6. Operating Restrictions:
 - 6.1 Multioperator, Single Transmitter and Multioperator, Two Transmitter stations are limited to six (6) band changes per clock hour per transmitter. Violation of this rule will result in the entry being reclassified in the Multioperator, Multitransmitter category.
 - 6.2 Call signs must indicate the DXCC entity of operation. For example, a KL7 station operating in Florida must use a call sign such as KL7AA/W4 and a US station operating in Puerto Rico must use KP4/W9JJ or the equivalent.
7. Awards
 - 7.1 [Online certificates](#) will be available to all eligible participants. This includes:
 - 7.1.1 Top Single Operator, All Band entries (QRP, Low Power, High Power) in each DXCC entity and ARRL/RAC section.
 - 7.1.2 Top Single Operator, Single Band entries in each ARRL/RAC section and each DXCC entity.

- 7.1.3 Top Single Operator Unlimited, High Power and Single Operator Unlimited, Low Power in each ARRL/RAC section and each DXCC entity.
- 7.1.4 Top Multioperator entries (Single Operator, High Power; Single Operator, Low Power; Multioperator, Two-Transmitter, and Multioperator, Multitransmitter) in each DXCC entity, US call area, and in Canada
- 7.1.5 DX stations submitting an entry with more than 500 contacts on either mode.
- 7.1.6 Additional certificates will be awarded as appropriate.
- 7.2 Plaques (if sponsored) will be awarded to stations in the following categories for both the CW and Phone contests:
 - 7.2.1 Top W/VE Score in the following categories:
 - Single Operator, All Band, QRP
 - Single Operator, All Band, Low Power
 - Single Operator, All Band, High Power
 - Single Operator, Single Band, (160-10m)
 - Single Operator, Unlimited, High Power
 - Single Operator, Unlimited, Low Power
 - Multioperator, Single Transmitter, Low Power
 - Multioperator, Single Transmitter, High Power
 - Multioperator, Two Transmitter
 - Multioperator, Multitransmitter
 - 7.2.2 Top Score in the Single Operator, All Band category, worldwide and on each continent.
 - 7.2.3 Top Score DX station worldwide and on each continent:
 - Single Operator, All Band, QRP
 - Single Operator, All Band, Low Power
 - Single Operator, All Band, High Power
 - Single Operator, Single Band, (160-10m)
 - Single Operator, Unlimited, High Power
 - Single Operator, Unlimited, Low Power
 - Multioperator, Single Transmitter, Low Power
 - Multioperator, Single Transmitter, High Power
 - Multioperator, Two Transmitter
 - Multioperator, Multitransmitter
 - 7.2.4 Additional Special Plaques will be awarded as sponsored.
 - 7.2.5 Entrants who qualify for unsponsored plaques may purchase them from the ARRL Contest Branch.
- 8. Log Submission
 - 8.1 Logs are due SEVEN (7) days after the event is over at 2359 UTC. If an extension of the log deadline is needed, contact the ARRL Contest Program Manager. All entries received are displayed on the [Logs Received](#) page.
 - 8.2 Send paper logs to the ARRL, addressed to DX CW Contest or DX Phone Contest.

Categories for HF Contests

Version 1.11 – 22 Oct 2020

Entry Categories for HF Contests

Category Summary <i>(See Special Rules of each contest for Mode-based Categories)</i>						
Categories	QRP ⁵	Low Power (LP) ⁵	High Power (HP) ⁵	Band Change Restrictions	Spotting Assistance	Number of Simultaneous Signals ⁴
Single Operator (SO)	Yes	Yes	Yes	None	No	One
Single Operator Unlimited (SOU)	Yes	Yes	Yes	None	Yes	One
Single Operator, Single Band (SOSB) ²	No	No	Yes	Not Applicable	No	One
Multioperator, Single Transmitter (MS)	No	Yes	Yes	10 per clock hour	Yes	One
Multioperator, Two Transmitter (M2) ¹	No	No	Yes	10 per clock hour for each transmitter	Yes	Two
Multioperator, Multitransmitter (MM) ¹	No	No	Yes	None	Yes	One per Band
School Club (S) ³	No power sub-categories			None	Yes	One
Checklog	n/a			n/a	n/a	n/a

1 — Not supported in Sweepstakes, 10-Meter Contest, 160-Meter Contest, IARU HF Championship

2 — Only supported in ARRL DX

3 — Only supported in Sweepstakes

4 — Multiple signals are not allowed on the same band, regardless of category or mode.

5 — See Definitions and Glossary for power category definitions

HCAT.1. Single Operator (SO)

HCAT.1.1. Use of spotting assistance is not permitted.

HCAT.1.2. Only one transmitted signal is permitted at any time

HCAT.1.3. Power sub-categories include QRP (SOQRP), Low Power (SOLP), and High Power (SOHP).

HCAT.2. Single Operator Unlimited (SOU)

HCAT.2.1. Use of spotting assistance is permitted. Exception: spotting information obtained from any source outside the station circle via a closed or dedicated communication link may not be used.

HCAT.2.2. Only one transmitted signal is permitted at any time, not including transmissions on a spotting net or network.

HCAT.2.3. In contests that do not have SOU categories, Single Operator entries from stations using spotting assistance will be changed to the Multioperator, Single Transmitter (MS) category.

HCAT.2.4. Power sub-categories include QRP (SOUQRP), Low Power (SOULP), and High Power (SOUHP).

HCAT.3. Single Operator Single-Band (SOSB)

HCAT.3.1. A participant may submit only one SOSB entry from a single call sign. If contacts are made on other bands, they should be included in the log.

HCAT.3.2. There are no power sub-categories for SOSB.

HCAT.3.3. Only contacts from the band of entry are counted towards the final score. Contacts from other bands will be used for log-checking but will not result in log-checking penalties.

HCAT.3.4. SOSB from stations using spotting assistance will be changed to the Single Operator, Unlimited, High Power category.

HCAT.4. Multioperator

HCAT.4.1. Use of spotting assistance is permitted. Exception: spotting information obtained from any source outside the station circle via a closed or dedicated communication link may not be used.

HCAT.4.2. Multioperator, Single Transmitter (MS)

HCAT.4.2.1. Only one transmitted signal is allowed at any time.

HCAT.4.2.2. Unless stated otherwise in a contest's Special Rules, stations are limited to a maximum of 6 band changes during any clock hour. Violation of this rule will result in the entry category being changed to Multioperator, Multitransmitter.

HCAT.4.2.3. Power sub-categories include Low Power (MSLP) and High Power (MSHP).

HCAT.4.3. Multioperator, Two Transmitter (M2)

HCAT.4.3.1. Only two transmitted signals are allowed at any time and must be on different bands.

HCAT.4.3.2. Each transmitter is limited to a maximum of 6 band changes in any clock hour. Unused band changes may not be transferred between transmitters. Violation of this rule will result in the entry category being changed to Multioperator, Multitransmitter.

HCAT.4.3.3. Both transmitters may contact any station. A station may only be contacted once per band regardless of which transmitter is used.

HCAT.4.3.4. The submitted log must indicate which transmitter made each contact.

HCAT.4.4. Multioperator, Multitransmitter (MM)

HCAT.4.4.1. One transmitted signal is allowed per band at any time.

HCAT.5 School Club

HCAT.5.1. School Club stations may be grouped by the type of institution:

HCAT.5.1.1. College and University

HCAT.5.1.2. Technical School

HCAT.5.1.3. Secondary and other school

HCAT.5.2. Only currently enrolled students and faculty/staff of the institution are eligible to operate a School Club station. Alumni may participate on the air with students. It is not, however, in the spirit of the category for alumni exclusively to use the club station. Alumni should make every effort to act in a mentoring role to current student club members.

HCAT.5.3. There are no sub-categories for School Club entries.

HCAT.5.4. School Club stations must operate from stations located on-campus. A club may operate from an off-campus station only if no on-campus station exists.

HCAT.5.5. Spotting assistance may be used by School Club stations.

Rules for Entry

Version 1.03 – 22 Oct 2020

Conditions of Entry

COND.1. By submitting a log, entrants agree to be bound by the contest rules. Violation of the contest rules or engaging in prohibited conduct may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the ARRL Awards Committee up to and including disqualification.

COND.2 Multiple entries

COND.2.1 In HF contests: Individuals and stations may submit multiple entries per contest under different call signs.

COND.2.2 In VHF+ contests: Individuals and stations are limited to one entry per contest. Rover operators may submit one separate entry as a Single Operator (fixed station) in addition to their rover entry.

COND.3. Log contents used to determine final score and awards will be available to the public.

COND.4. Entrants agree to follow the regulations of their operating licenses and station licenses at all times.

COND.5. Entrants agree to be bound by the decisions of the ARRL Awards Committee.

COND.6. All entries become the property of the ARRL and are not returnable.

Operating and Entry Restrictions

OPRG.1. Call signs and exchange information must be sent, received, acknowledged and logged correctly for a complete contact.

OPRG.2. An operator may not use more than one call sign from any given location during the contest period.

OPRG.3. Alternating CQs on two or more frequencies using the same band and mode is prohibited.

OPRG.4. Each contact must include contemporaneous direct initiation by both operators making a contact. Initiation of a contact may be by either local or remote control.

OPRG.5. Aeronautical and Maritime/Marine Mobile stations

OPRG.5.1. In contests in which DX stations may be worked by W/VE stations, contacts with aeronautical mobile and maritime mobile stations outside the US and Canada count for contact credit only.

OPRG.5.2. In VHF+ contests, contacts with aeronautical mobile stations do not count for contest credit.

OPRG.5.3. In VHF+ contests, Maritime/Marine mobile stations will be listed separately as "Marine Mobile" in the listings and compete separately for awards.

OPRG.6. 50.110 MHz is the DX SSB calling frequency and W/VE stations are expected to only answer CQs from DX on that frequency. W/VE stations can call CQ DX on SSB from 50.100 to 50.125 MHz with 50.125 MHz being the current calling frequency for W/VE stations. If contest activity is present, W/VE stations should move higher in the band from the calling frequency. CW activity is concentrated from 50.080 to 50.100 MHz with no specific calling frequency. 50.313 MHz is the current carrier frequency for FT8 AFSK signals and 50.318 MHz for FT4.

OPRG.7. Only one transmitted signal per band is permitted at any time, not including signals for the purposes described in OPRG.8.

OPRG.8. Spotting Assistance in VHF+ contests

OPRG.8.1. All entrants, regardless of category, are permitted to use spotting assistance or nets including but not limited to DX-alerting nets, internet chat rooms, APRS and other packet, reverse beacon networks and repeaters to identify stations available for contacts and to announce (self-spot) their availability for contacts.

OPRG.8.2. Announcements shall be limited to call sign, location, band or frequency, mode and — if applicable — transmitting sequence and listening direction.

OPRG.8.3. These methods of spotting assistance may also be used to coordinate antenna peaking prior to initiation of the contact and to explain contest rules, such as the exchange required, for those who need clarification.

OPRG.8.4. Such assistance may not be used to facilitate the completion of any contact once the contact has commenced. This means such assistance may not be used to convey receipt or non-receipt of any required element of a contact or to request a repeat of any required element of a contact.

Station and Equipment Restrictions

STTN.1. A transmitter used to contact one or more stations may not be subsequently used under any other call sign during the contest period, except for family stations where more than one call has been issued, and then only if the second call sign is used by a different operator. *(The intent of this rule is to accommodate family members who must share a radio and to prohibit manufactured or artificial contacts.)*

STTN.2. All transmitters and receivers must be located within a 500-meter diameter circle, excluding antennas.

STTN.3. Remote receiving installations outside the 500-meter circle are prohibited. Stations remotely controlled by radio link may use necessary equipment at the control point. This does not allow using the control point as another receiving location.

STTN.4. A station located precisely on a dividing line between grid squares must select only one as the location for exchange purposes. A different grid-square location cannot be given without moving the complete station (including antennas) at least 100 meters.

STTN.5. Above 300 GHz, contacts are permitted for contest credit only between licensed amateurs using mono-chromatic signal sources (for example, laser and LED) and employing at least one stage of electronic detection on receive. Laser usage is restricted to ANSI Z136 Class I, II, IIa, and IIIa (i.e.; output power is less than 5 mW).

STTN.6. While no minimum distance is specified for contacts, equipment should be capable of communications at a range of at least 1 km.

Prohibited Conduct

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

PROH.1. Claiming cross-band contacts.

PROH.2. Use of systems such as repeaters, gateways, or digipeaters to relay on-the-air signals. Satellites may be used only if permitted by the contest rules. This does not apply to the remote control of a station.

PROH.3. In HF contests, arranging, soliciting, or confirming any contacts during or after the contest by use of any non-amateur radio means such as telephone, text messaging, websites, email, or social media. In VHF+ contests, see rule OPRG.8. "Spotting Assistance in VHF+ Contests".

PROH.4. Spotting your own station ("self-spotting") or asking to be spotted by another station.

PROH.5. Misrepresenting contact times ("rubber clocking") to meet band change or off time rules.

PROH.6. Claiming excessive unverifiable contacts or multipliers ("log padding").

PROH.7. Transmitting signals with excessive bandwidth (e.g., spurious emissions) or harmonics.

PROH.8. Failure to identify transmissions in a timely manner (i.e., for longer periods than 1 minute).

PROH.9. Repeater input or output frequencies may not be used without the permission of the repeater owner.

Log Checking Penalties

Logs are cross-checked using custom software and human judgment.

LGCK.1. Duplicate contacts are removed with no additional scoring penalty.

LGCK.2. Contacts with call sign errors ("Busted") or that are not found in the corresponding log ("NIL") are removed from the log and an additional scoring penalty of the QSO point value of that contact is assessed.

LGCK.3. Contacts with an incorrectly received exchange are removed with no additional scoring penalty.

Disciplinary Actions

DSCP.1. Disqualified entries will be listed in the published results, are not eligible for an award, and are not eligible to submit an entry in the next running of that contest.

DSCP.2. Notification of Award Committee actions will be sent by email to the address provided with the log submission. The entrant has five days to appeal the decision to the Contest Program Manager. If there is no response, after that time the decision is final.

DSCP.3. The Awards Committee reserves the right to change the category of any entry based on its examination of the log or other information.

Log Submission Rules

Version 1.01 – 30 April 2020

Electronic Log Submission

ELOG.1. The official ARRL format for electronic logs is the Cabrillo format (wwwrof.org/cabrillo).

ELOG 1.1. A paper printout of an electronic log file is not an acceptable substitute. A utility for converting log files in non-Cabrillo format to Cabrillo is available at www.b4h.net/cabforms.

ELOG.2. Electronic logs must be submitted via contest-log-submission.arrl.org with the exception of Field Day, Straight Key Night, 10 GHz and Up, ARRL EME, Rookie Roundup, and School Club Roundup.

ELOG.3. Electronic logs are assumed to be signed as complying with all contest rules and conditions when they are submitted.

ELOG.4. Multioperator logs must include the complete list of operators in the Cabrillo OPERATORS: field.

ELOG.5. Multioperator, Two Transmitter (M2) category logs must indicate which transmitter makes each contact in the log.

Paper Log Submission

PLOG.1. Entrants must use the most current official contest forms or an acceptable facsimile, as scoring rules, ARRL sections, etc., do change periodically. See the ARRL website for downloadable forms.

PLOG.2 Paper logs may be mailed to ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111, USA. Each paper log entry must be accompanied by a Summary Sheet listing all scoring information, the category of competition, and the entrant's name.

PLOG.3. Paper entries with 500 or more contacts must include an official dupe sheet for the contest.

Log Submission Deadline

LGDL.1. Entries must be sent to the ARRL by the log deadline published in the rules for each contest. For electronic submissions, the submission date and time is determined by the app confirmation. For paper entries submitted by mail, submission date and time is determined from the postmark.

LGDL.2. Submitted entries will be listed on the [Logs Received](#) page until final results are published.

LGDL.3. Logs not submitted or postmarked by the contest deadline are not eligible for awards.

LGDL.4. Entries received at the ARRL after the contest submission deadline may not be included in the contest results.

Definitions and Glossary

Version 1.03 – 12 Oct 2020

Automated Multi-Channel Decoder: Device such as *CW Skimmer* software that provides information about the identity and frequency of contest station transmissions while functioning independently of the operator's direct control and participation. Software that displays multiple decoded signals at the same time is considered to be a multi-channel decoder.

Band Changes: A band change consists of two consecutive contacts on different bands. For example, making a contact on 20 meters then on 40 meters and then on 20 meters counts as two band changes.

Clock Hour: A clock hour is from zero to 59 minutes on the clock, not any 60 consecutive minutes.

Digital (mode): Any mode defined as "data" in the FCC Part 97 rules (§97.3(c)(2)).

Dupe Sheet: An alphanumerically sorted list of all contacts made during the contest, sorted by band and mode as appropriate. A list of duplicate contacts does not meet this requirement.

DX Stations: Any non-W/VE station. This includes US possessions and territories in the Caribbean and Pacific and St. Paul Island (CY9) and Sable Island (CYØ). Exceptions such as the status of Hawaii (KH6) and Alaska (KL7) are stated in the Special Rules for each contest.

DXCC Entities: defined by ARRL DXCC List

Electronic Log or Entry: consists of any log submitted by electronic means.

High Power (HP): 1500 watts PEP output or the maximum allowable power level established by the national licensing authority issuing the operator and/or station license, whichever is less.

Low Power (LP):

Below 30 MHz:	150 watts PEP output or less
50 MHz and 144 MHz bands:	200 watts PEP output or less
222 MHz and 432 MHz bands:	100 watts PEP output or less
902 MHz and above:	50 watts PEP output or less

Maritime Mobile: For the purposes of ARRL contests, maritime mobile is defined as shipboard operation, outside of the territorial waters of the country (defined for these purposes as 12 miles offshore).

Maximum Number of Signals: This Maximum Number does not include a signal necessary to provide spotting assistance, i.e. 2m packet connection. Other than that exception, it is the maximum number of signals that a station may emit at any time.

Multioperator: More than one person performs all transmitting, receiving, and logging functions as well as equipment and antenna adjustments.

Off Time: A period during which no contacts are logged. Unless otherwise specified, to count as off time, there must be at least 30 consecutive minutes in the log without a contact. During off time, operators may not listen to contest activity.

QRP: 5 watts PEP output or less

RTTY (mode): Any mode defined as “RTTY” in the FCC Part 97 rules (§97.3(c)(7)).

Single Operator: One person performs all transmitting, receiving, and logging functions as well as equipment and antenna adjustments.

Spotting Assistance: Use of any operating arrangements involving other individuals, DX-alerting nets, packet, Internet, automated multi-channel recorders, chat rooms, etc. Generating spotting information for use by other stations is not considered to be spotting assistance.