



Hong Kong Amateur Radio DX Association

RECOMMENDED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SIX METER OPERATORS

As At 15th June, 2000

HARDXA DX Operating Etiquette Series
Bulletin No. 1

Hong Kong Amateur Radio DX Association

Recommended Code of Practice For Six Meter Operators

HARDXA DX OPERATING ETIQUETTE SERIES, BULLETIN ONE

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Issued jointly by:

UKSMG : United Kingdom Six Meter Group

HARDXA : Hong Kong Amateur Radio DX Association

JAROC : Japanese Amateur Radio Overseas Club, H.K.

SIXITALIA : Italy's Six Meter Group

DRAA : Dodecanese Radio Amateurs Association

Notes: There are geographic variations to these recommendations due to varying local band plans and licensing regulations. We would encourage other societies to adopt this code of practice.

This is the recommended **Voluntary Operating Code Of Practice** as issued by the **UKSMG** and **HARDXA** in conjunction with **JAROC, SIXITALIA and DRAA**. In due course, it is hoped that many other Amateur Radio Societies will adopt the recommendations over time. The **Voluntary Operating Code Of Practice** is aimed at all amateurs using 6m with the hope that its adoption will make the band more productive and fun for everyone.

Now that the use of the 6m band is at an all-time high with cycle-23 encroaching, it is very important that the way each of us use

the band does not upset our many close radio neighbours by spoiling their ability to work DX stations and have fun themselves. Please read these recommendations carefully and try to adopt their use in every day operating. The alternative is that your poor operating practices will bring your callsign into disrepute that will be remembered for many years we are sure!

You automatically represent your country every time you transmit and if you do not abide by internationally accepted practices and conventions you are effectively disgracing yourself and all your fellow country amateurs!

6m AS A DX BAND: 6-meters is a DX band just like any other of the amateur radio high frequency DX bands and it, along with other 6m operators should be treated with respect and tolerance.

LOCAL BAND PLAN: Always respect your local band plan. In Asia this will be different for **IARU Region III** members as each country may vary slightly. However you should refer local telecommunications band allocations as there may be variations in band allocations from country to country. Some countries still do not have 6m operation privileges yet!

LOCAL QSOs: Do not cause nuisance and disturbance to other dedicated 6-meter local or overseas DX operators with local QSOs within the 50.100 to 50.130 MHz DX window. If you wish to local rag-chew, it is recommended that you do this above 50.200 MHz where interference will be minimised. *Note: Please remember in Europe that French operators are not allowed below 50.200 so local QSOs just above 50.200 could affect their ability to work DX.*

LEARN TO LISTEN: True 6-meter Dxers spend about 5% of their time transmitting while 95% of the time is spent listening and observing changing band conditions and propagation modes. Learn to recognize propagation mode characteristics and when the band is likely to be showing signs of an opening. This will be far more effective than just calling CQ DX at random and ad infinitum.

50.100 – 50.130 DX WINDOW: The DX Window is a widely accepted concept and should, *in principle*, be used for **INTER-CONTINENTAL DX** QSOs only, especially the 50.110 calling frequency as discussed below. The definition of what constitutes a 'DX' station naturally lies with an individual operator, especially when a particular station **within your own continent** constitutes a new country! We would ask you to think carefully before having any intra-Asian QSOs in the DX window. For those of us in Asia, this is especially important in periods of multiple-hop **E**s or **F2** propagation to avoid burying inter-continental and European QSO opportunities under a layer of Asian QRM.

PLEASE BE SENSIBLE and avoid local QSOs in the DX window if at all possible or move up in frequency once initial contact has been established.

As the DX Window is heavily used, always listen before you call and always ask if the frequency is being used before you transmit (should be done on any frequency anyway). Just because YOU can't hear anything, it does not mean that the frequency is not occupied or some rare DX is using it. Remember that operating etiquette calls for you to ask if the frequency is occupied BEFORE calling CQ.

50.110 INTERNATIONAL CALLING FREQUENCY: The international DX calling frequency is 50.110 MHz. This should be used for long range DX contacts and such contacts should be inter-continental (outside of your own continent) in nature. **Do not under any circumstances** engage in local continental QSOs on this frequency even for a minute or two. If a local station returns to your CQ, move quickly up the band to an unused frequency **above 50.130 MHz**. Do not use the DX calling frequency for testing or tuning up your radio or antenna, you should do this somewhere else and should use a dummy load. By tuning up on the calling frequencies, you are causing QRM and a nuisance not only to locals but DXers internationally, it is bad form also and is very impolite to adopt such poor operating

practice. You will also be accredited internationally as a poor DXer!

Do not partake or encourage pile-ups on 110. If you have a successful CQ ensure that you QSY elsewhere up the band.

50.110 CQ'ING: LISTENING is the first rule of working rare DX on 6m. So think twice before calling CQ on 110. It would be stupid to say that you shouldn't call CQ but please remember that it is a shared frequency so your reputation will be on line if you insist on calling CQ unceasingly every minute of the day or throughout an opening – even if you do say “CQ DX only” or “CQ outside of my continent only”.

The occasional CQ is good as it can discover an unrecognised opening.

If you are a 6m Dixer and have been intensely listening for weak exotica for hours on 110 and up pops a CQ caller, rather than ask him rudely to clear off, ask them **POLITELY** to QSY and **TELL THEM WHY OR WHAT YOU ARE HEARING OR LISTENING FOR**, and please **GIVE YOUR CALLSIGN**. Of course, this equally applies well to any frequency on 6m. Most operators are sensible and will do so – probably because they would like to work the DX themselves! Conversely, if you all CQ or are occupying 110 and someone asks you politely to QSY and **GIVES YOU A REASON**, do so without arguing about the rights of doing so – remember that you share this resource with thousands of other operators.

If you really must call CQ on 110, think twice, listen for 5 minutes, cross your legs, count to 100, and if the overwhelming desire is still there, go ahead and CALL – but keep it short! At the end of the day the choice is yours and yours alone. Don't forget to QSY when successful unless it is rare once off inter-continental DX!

QSO TECHNIQUES: Many operators do not take the time to learn how to DX, develop skills and techniques, some have

developed their own styles and or use CB style techniques and jump right in. This is not to be recommended as typical 6m propagation does not allow wasting of time during DX QSOs due to the nature of propagation of the band (Borderline HF/VHF). Openings could be very short in the time duration and DX stations want to work as many callers as they can during an opening. There is plenty written on how to carry out effective DX QSOs by many renowned Dxers, so there is simply no excuse for not finding out.

Basically, follow the style and take the lead of the DX operator in providing information. Otherwise keep it simple and to the point as there are other stations who are waiting in line for a QSO with the DX station. Do not waste time in exchanging unnecessary information such as locator codes, names, QTH, equipment, weather and so on. Just exchange your call signs and confirm your signal reports and move on to allow other Dxers to have their QSOs. Leave out the extra information (such as Maidenhead squares, your not operating on HF!) unless it is requested. Do not repeat useless information such as QSL via the bureau as this takes up time (6m DXers do not usually QSL via bureaus in any case!) Many opportunities to work a rare DX station are extremely short and if your operating practices prevent others from working the station it will be remembered by those who missed out for a long time. Next time it may be you who misses out.

For more details about how to be successful in 6m pile-ups read ["Working Pile-ups & CQing on 110"](#).

DX PILE – UP OPERATING: Working and breaking DX pile-ups can be a frustrating experience on 6m as it is on HF. Manners and good operating are very important. You should listen to the DX stations carefully and not continue to call if they request a particular country or prefix to go back to them if that is not you. You should always go back with your complete callsign, give it quickly and give it once. There is nothing more frustrating and aggravating for others in a pile-up to double with a DX station and who they are going back to. Of course, you should NOT call if

you cannot hear the DX station, you will only become part of the QRM problem!

If a QSO is uncompleted due to QSB or QRM, don't continue to try and complete the QSO to an excessive degree, use your judgement and call back later. It is likely that others are hearing them OK and can complete a QSO. Take the lead from the DX station and don't call back immediately if they are working someone else. The message is simple, try to avoid calling over the top of the DX station – it does you no good and just upsets fellow DXers.

SPLIT FREQUENCY OPERATION: When a DX station creates a large pile-up of stations all calling him on their own operating frequency (simplex operating) it creates tremendous QRM problems for those calling and the DX station. Under these circumstances, it is recommended that the DX station uses split operating; that is *transmitting* on one frequency but *listening* over a range of frequencies **above** the frequency being used by the DX station. This mode of operating will significantly increase the QSO rate of the DX station.

However, split operating on 6m can cause **TREMENDOUS** interference with other DX operators who, through no fault of their own, are running a simplex pile-up in the same split frequency section of the band. **To minimise this interference, it is recommended that a maximum split of 10KHz (definitely not 100KHz) is used.**

DUPLICATE QSOs: It is always tempting to call rare DX station every time you hear it. This should be avoided as it means that you are taking away the opportunity for the DX station to work a new station and give them their first QSO with the DX country. Use your judgement if the DX station is known to be rare! Conversely, a quick call can sometimes be useful if no one else is going back to the station to show that there is in fact propagation but no one is responding!

CW OPERATION: CW is probably the major mode of operation on 6-meters due to the extremely weak nature of many real DX openings. Do **not** call a CW DX station using SSB as they will not be able to hear you and you will be causing severe interference to other CW DXers trying to work the station. The contrary is true as well, if you cannot break a SSB pile-up using SSB then do not call using CW!

FM QSOs: All FM transmissions should be made above 50.300 MHz for the obvious reason that FM is wide band and could wipe out weak DX signals. There is no acceptable reason to transmit FM below 50.300 MHz, as there is plenty of spectrum allocated for this purpose. The frequency where FM transmissions may start may vary in other countries.

OTHER MODES: In our region, there are other modes which are quite popular for operation, these include **Amplitude Modulation (AM)** , **Slow Scan Television (SSTV)**, **Pactor**, **Packet**, **PSK31**, **Feld Hell** and **Other data modes**. No operation of AM , SSTV or data modes should take place anywhere between 50.100 MHz and 50.270 MHz. Most SSTV operation takes place within +/- 10KHz of 50.300 MHz and similarly Am takes place around 50.500Mhz. Data comms. should therefore take place above 50.

MICROPHONE GAIN: Many operators turn their microphone gain all the way to the end-stop and also switch in their speech processors, this can cause a very annoying distorted signal to be transmitted. Your speech will be over compressed which will sound like heavy breathing and all the background noise will be greatly amplified and transmitted as well. It will make it very unpleasant for the station listening or in QSO with you. Your microphone gain should be adjusted to be within the Automatic Level Control limits. Proper gain adjustments will also reduce frequency splatter which is will also interfere with operators on nearby frequencies. This is a common problem with many operators on many bands and not just 6 meters.

Notes: This code of Practice may be amended by **UKSMG, HARDXA, JAROC, SIXITALIA & DRAA** from time to time to reflect current licensing conditions and operating practices in their respective Country and Region.

If you have any comments, additions or amendments please email:

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