International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Europe, Middle East, Africa and Northern Asia   Founded 1950

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SUBJECT	HF Managers Handbook – Guidelines for HF Contests		
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GUIDELINES FOR HF CONTESTS

Contents
1. Foreword
2. Contest Committee
3. Classification of contests
4. Preparation for contest
5. Contest rules
6. Duration of contests
7. Competition classes
8. Frequencies
9. Contest Free Band Segments
10. Log formats and adjudication
11. Publication of Logs

1. FOREWORD

The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist Contest Organisers, Contest Managers, Contest Committees and Contesters with a guide to define some elements of contesting and to establish some common understandings or "ethics" and to assure equality in dealing with HF Contest work.

2. CONTEST COMMITTEE

Each Region 1 member society is recommended to appoint a contest committee or an equivalent body containing at least three experienced persons.

This group should be given the authority and responsibility to take decisions in any dispute or irregularities in connection with the contest. It is good practice that this group's decisions are regarded as final and indisputable, as indicated by the contest rules

3. CLASSIFICATION OF CONTESTS

To assist those countries where amateur radio is a recognised sport, contests are classified into three categories:

1. INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS.
These are contests where entrants come from more than one country.

2. REGIONAL CONTESTS.
These are contests where entrants come from a few countries within close proximity.

3. NATIONAL CONTESTS.
These are contests where majority of entrants come from one country.

Rules for Regional or National contests should not penalise entrants from working stations outside of their own country.

4. PREPARATION FOR CONTEST

This is a matter for the contest organiser, but generally on-site-work (e.g. mounting stations and antennas etc) of technical and/or logistic nature is generally before the contest start. In certain contests (e.g. Field Days) restrictions may be laid down.

It is a matter for the contest organiser to decide in defining the rules, but generally contest traffic and any activity in connection with this, only takes place within the contest period and from the contest site using Amateur Radio frequencies and Internet links.

5. CONTEST RULES

IARU Region 1 wants to encourage creativity and innovation in terms of its approach to contesting and as such wants to limit the restrictive nature of its guidelines concerning contesting. Thus, the organising committee is free to decide the rules within the general or any specific guidelines laid out in this chapter and relevant Conference Recommendations.

The contest shall preferably be fixed to a certain weekend, or day within a week, every year in order that other member societies can harmonise their contest activity as much as is possible.

The contest committees should ensure that their contest rules are published in good time, ideally 4 months before the contest, using the web and reflectors and if required magazines.

As a guideline contest organisers may wish to consider the following issues when deciding the rules for their contest:

1. Name of contest
2. Contest period(s)
3. Sections (competition classes)
4. Frequencies
5. Contest call and exchange
6. Scoring (QSO points)
7. Multipliers
8. Final score
9. Special conditions
10. Log instructions
11. Internet linking between stations
12. Use of Internet for spotting

13. Rules on skeds (both prior to and during the contest)
14. Declaration
15. Log format and means of submission
16. Publication of logs
17. Closing date for log
18. Awards
19. Dispute

Depending upon the nature of the contest, organisers need to consider whether or not it is necessary to warn competitors against, and set penalties for issues such as "log padding[1]" and "unqiues[2]".

6. DURATION OF CONTESTS

To assist contest organisers the following definitions are generally applied:

- International contests or other contests with an average of more than 1000 participants may continue for the whole weekend, 48 hrs. For single operators, rest periods may be prescribed.

- Regional / Continental oriented contests or other contests with an average of between 500 and 1000 participants should not last more than max 36 hrs.

- National contests or other contests with less than 500 participants should not last more than max. 24 hrs.

- The time period should be chosen to fall within the weekend around the world (i.e. 1200
- UTC Saturday - 1200 UTC Sunday)

National/local contests may use other time periods.

7. COMPETITION CLASSES

The organising society is free to decide which classes are to be included in the contest rules. It should be left to SWL clubs to organise SWL events in parallel with existing contests. Generally, the following definitions are used:

- SO - Single Operator
  A SO station is a station manned by an individual operator. Transmission of only one signal permitted at any time.

- SOSB - Single Operator Single Band
  A SOSB station is a SO station operated on one single amateur band.

- SOMB - Single Operator Multi Band

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[1] Log padding: where the same station contacts the contest station repeatedly using different callsigns.
[2] Uniques: used here to mean a station callsign that appears in the log submitted by only one of the stations submitting logs to the contest adjudicator.

A SOMB station is a SO station operating on any of the bands specified in the contest rules.

- MO - Multi Operator
  A MO station is a station manned by more than one operator. Operation is permitted on all bands specified in the contest rules.

- MOST - Multi Operator Single Transmitter
  A MOST station is a MO station transmitting not more than one signal at any time.

- MOMT - Multi Operator Multi Transmitter
  A MOMT station is a MO station transmitting not more than one signal per band at any time.

- QRP   Power limited to 5 watt output

- QRPP   Power limited to 1 watt or less output

- SWL - Short Wave Listener
  A single person using only one receiver and not holding an amateur radio transmitting license

8. FREQUENCIES

The frequency planning for all contests should comply with the IARU Region 1 Bandplan (using contest preferred segments where possible), and depending upon the likely level of activity use as little spectrum as possible, thus observing the co-existence with non-contesting radio amateurs. It is important that contests organisers make every endeavour to ensure that some spectrum is available on each band for non-contest activity for the modes normally used in the sub-band in question.

In general multi-mode contests are not preferred, as they tend to occupy too much of the available band allocations. Organisers of contests should, for the same reason, avoid scheduling a major SSB contest concurrently with a major CW or datamode contest.

Contests should be restricted to 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10m. That is 30, 17 and 12m should not be used for contests.

9. CONTEST PREFERRED BAND SEGMENTS

Contest preferred band segments have been established on some bands. Always consult the IARU Region 1 Band Plan for actual contest preferred band segments. Currently the following Contest Preferred Band Segments are:

3.5 MHz CW 3510 - 3560 kHz
14 MHz CW 14000 -14060 kHz

3.5 MHz SSB 3600 - 3650 kHz & 3700 - 3800kHz
14 MHz SSB 14125 - 14300 kHz

10. LOG FORMAT & ADJUDICATION

Much progress has been made in recent years in the electronic submission of contest logs and their subsequent computerised adjudication.

Whilst for some contests paper logs, submitted as in the past, may still be appropriate the general guideline for IARU Region 1 is that all contest organisers should aim to move their contesters to 100% electronic log submission. Whilst the Cabrillo format for contest log submission is currently the norm, contest organisers are encouraged to improve the adjudication process by a general move towards an XML based submission format. National Society representatives on the HF Managers Committee are encouraged to collaboratively develop such an innovation.

Without wanting to make the guidelines too detailed, contest organisers are encouraged to share new ideas both in terms of the process and openness of the adjudication procedure and the availability of adjudication reports ("UBN" in CQ nomenclature). Contest organisers should seek advice from their national society's representative on the IARU Region 1 HF Committee where sharing and discussion of checking algorithms, contest software, etc, between different contest organising groups is encouraged and coordinated.

11. Publication of Logs

In relation to the ARRL's rules covering DXCC Accreditation Criteria there could be difficulties in terms of stations claiming credits for QSOs that are made with a station that subsequently submits its log to the Internet, where sufficient detail about the QSO (time, date, band, mode and callsign). IARU Region 1 is keen to provide incentives for Amateur operation and thus encourages contest stations not to publish in full their contest logs as this could subsequently make contacts with their station ineligible for awards such as DXCC.