# How We Will Operate

*Note to DXpeditioners: The text below is an example of information that could appear on your DXpedition Website setting forth the specifics of your operating. The idea is for* ***you*** *to tell DXers how* ***you*** *will operate. This will in turn tell them how best to call you -- what to expect from you; what to do and what NOT to do. You should rework the text as necessary to suit your needs. Explicit permission to use this text is not required.*

**How We Will Operate – Guidelines for Consistent Operating**

* With very few exceptions, we will work split. We will limit our listening space to no more than necessary. We should learn how to use the entire split; we won’t say “up 5 to 10” and then listen on only one frequency.
* If the pileup grows too large (5-8 kHz on CW, 10-15 kHz on SSB) we will divide the pileup in some manner. Continents are desirable; numbers are NOT desirable.

* We will operate on or very close to our designated frequencies. Sometimes a very small change – 100 Hz, for example -- will nullify intentional QRM, but we should be close to our published frequencies.

* We will try to operate in one place on one band for many hours at a time. This gives the callers a sense of confidence. We will not change bands if the band in use is producing a good rate to a desired part of the World. We will announce our intent to QSY, QRT or leave the frequency prior to doing so.

* We will persist with a callsign, then QRZ or NIL. ***No exceptions***. We will NOT call another station until we solicit another Q. Any deviation from this routine is a green light for DXers to call out of turn.

* Where possible, we will work the best propagation in order to keep the rate acceptable. We should not try to force the propagation, except perhaps to our target area.

* We will sign our callsign frequently. If someone asks, sign your callsign. If our callsign is short, sign after every QSO. This is the easiest procedure to remember.
* Accuracy, not speed will be of utmost importance for this operation. This is not a contest. We will give each station’s callsign completely and correctly at least once during each QSO. The caller deserves to be sure of his QSO. He should ***NOT*** need the on-line to confirm his QSO.

* We will remain calm while trying to control the pileup. We will not chastise DXers for improper calling – neither will we work those who call improperly!

# How to Work Us – A DXers Guide for the DXpedition Website

* Our Goal is to provide every station in the World the opportunity to make at least one QSO, and to enable top DXers to put our callsign in their log on as many bands and modes as possible.

* Let's get started. First, make sure you can copy us well enough for a good QSO. If signals are poor, would it be better to wait a while for better propagation? It can be very embarrassing to you for us to call you when you can't hear us.

* Unless otherwise noted, we will utilise split operation only. This means you cannot succeed by calling on our frequency. We aren't listening there. Be very careful to set up your transceiver so that you do not call on our transmit frequency. You must find where we are listening and then pick your next transmitting frequency accordingly.

* Our operators will try hard to work everyone in the world. Some areas will require more effort than others. Listen carefully to determine if we are trying to work a particular geographical area. Call if you are in that area. We will not respond to callers who are not in that area. If you are not in the desired area, spend the waiting time studying the pileup procedure of the operators.

* Call only if we are calling your exact callsign, if we are calling a very similar callsign or if we are asking for anyone to call. One matching letter in your callsign is NOT enough! Listen to the pileup again, and wait for the next opportunity to call. We will not respond to calls from stations other than those we are addressing. Keep in mind that many DXpedition operators may be hearing you even if they don't respond. You could earn a bad reputation in this way.

* If you do not hear who has been called, listen for a short time as the operator will probably call again. You don't want to miss his second call. When in doubt, DO NOT call, but rather try to determine the correct procedure. You will be far more successful by listening more and transmitting less.

* Be sure you have made a good QSO. If you aren't sure, make another QSO. It is best not to send a report until the operator sends your callsign correctly. If the operator does not send your callsign correctly, make another QSO. He may have actually worked someone else.

* Reiterating, we will not work stations who are:

   •Calling out of turn - when we are trying to work someone else   •Calling out of the called area - study the pileup and wait for your turn   •Calling with an obviously wrong partial callsign - use the time to study the pileup.

* These simple guidelines are intended to help you to get into our log quickly. They are consistent with our intended operating procedure. If you call the way we expect you to call, it makes sense that you will be in the log more easily and more often.

* We understand that no one is perfect, and that everyone will make mistakes. Keep your own house in order; make sure to minimize your own mistakes. Don't get frustrated. Our operators are some of the best in the World. Summon your greatest self control, and let us deal with the others. Soon, you will be in the log.

# BEST PRACTICES

**1. Check transmit and receive frequencies before starting.**

**Where to begin transmitting? This can be a difficult question. Ideally, transmitting frequencies will have been selected and published ahead of time. Selecting the frequencies for an expedition requires great care, and that is a separate topic.**

**Given a set of frequencies, and being ready to begin operation, the individual operator should begin operating as near to the pre-announced frequencies as possible. It is important that DXers be able to find him when beginning a session. If the selected frequency is occupied, it will be necessary to wait until it is clear or find another nearby frequency on which to begin. Beginning to transmit on an occupied frequency can lead to considerable grief, as DXers may not be able to hear the DXpedition and they will agitate to clear the frequency. Those using the frequency will not be happy, and may cause difficulty. This problem has been reduced through the use of Skimmers and the Reverse Beacon Network: If we call CQ on a different frequency, we will likely be spotted automatically, so everyone can find us quickly.**

**Selecting the receive frequency is even more difficult. The receive frequency will cover a range, and it is very likely that several of the frequencies in the range will be occupied. It is important to avoid activity on regularly occupied frequencies such as nets etc. Technically, DXers should listen before transmitting, but in practice, it may not happen. Many non-DXer hams avoid the “usual” DX frequencies however, so we are probably safe in using these frequencies for our pileup. Conversely, we should avoid unusual frequencies for our pileup.**

**2. Use split operation from the beginning.**

**Any DXpedition operator that expects even a moderate pileup should begin using split operation from the beginning. Virtually all DXpeditions, almost by definition, will need to use split operation.**

**Split operation is necessary so that the calling stations can hear the DX station and not be covered by those calling. Even when we cannot hear many stations calling, it is likely that other, weaker stations are hearing us and calling. Even when we cannot hear them, these weaker stations can cause QRM for others at their distant locations. Again, it is imperative that the DX station utilize split operation so that callers can hear and so the DX operator’s instructions can be heard.**

**3. Maintain a rhythm of regular transmissions – no long silences.**

**DXers want to think that their QSO will be the very next one in the DXpedition log. This concept is crucial in maintaining order. A good rate and very steady operation leads to this feeling among DXers. Such operation will help maintain the confidence of the callers. This confidence is a calming factor, which will help to minimize chaos-inducing frustration. A steady rate also helps to synchronize calling and listening, making our job of finding calls in the pileup easier.**

**4. Do not use excessive speed on CW. Slow down when signals are weak.**

**Surprisingly, excessive CW speed does not enhance the QSO rate. Rather, an inability to copy speeds greater than 35 wpm may in itself lead to frustration among callers, with its consequent effects. It is likely that excessive speed may also reduce the overall QSO rate because of dupes caused by uncertainty in copying calls. In addition to dupes, there may be many broken calls resulting from a DXer’s inability to copy the call sign that we send. He will “mostly” hear his call, but if we don’t have it exactly right, he may not know it, and we will end up logging a broken call. He will be lucky when he doesn’t find his call in the on-line log and he works us again.**

**5. Reduce speed further on CW to pass information to the pileup.**

**It is a fact that most DXers cannot copy code effectively at speeds in excess of 30 wpm. Even at 30 wpm, many DXers may only be able to decode their own calls. If we wish to communicate to the callers things like where to call, who we are listening for, and when we will QRT or QRX, we must slow to at least 25 wpm, if not less. It is possible to communicate even complicated instructions to a pileup on CW, but we MUST slow our code.**

**6. Sign our call sign at least every minute.**

**It can be very frustrating for DXers to hear a station working many stations at a good rate and not to know who it is. It is in our best interest to sign frequently. If we do not, the callers might soon become frustrated, ask continually for our call and perhaps try to trigger chaos.**

**We should have a regular “signature” at the end of each QSO consisting of our call, and the calling instructions, where to call, and who we are looking for.**

**7. Issue calling instructions after every QSO, for example 'UP5 EU' on CW or 'NA UP 5-10' on SSB.**

**As noted in “6” above, it’s important to sign our call sign frequently. It is equally important to transmit calling instructions after EVERY QSO. (If we do not, attentive DXers will call based on the lack of instructions.)**

**These instructions should include where DXers should call, and whom we are listening for. For example, on SSB, we can say “Thanks, PT0S Europe up 5 to 10”. On CW we might send “TU PT0S UP5 EU.” This means PT0S is looking for Europe up [at least] five kHz. We might also say "Down 5". Having these messages stored in the computer can help.**

**8. Minimize Pileup Width: Suggest Max 5-8 kHz CW and 10-15 kHz SSB.**

**This is arguably the most important operational matter. Excessive pileup width often draws more criticism than any other aspect of DXpedition operating. The bands do not belong to DXers or DXpeditioners. Taking excessive band width for our pileup damages relations with non-DXers.**

**Further, there is absolutely no reason for using large parts of a band for our pileup. If we seem to need more then 10 – 15 kHz at some point, we must employ methods to reduce the number of callers. It is NOT necessary to use more than 10 – 15 kHz for a SSB pileup and 5-8 kHz for a CW pileup. If a pileup of this width creates difficulty for the DXpedition operator, it will be necessary to pare the pile in such a way as to reduce the number of callers. Limiting the callers to certain geographic areas, call areas, etc. will make the job easier and use less of the band.**

**Some ‘experts’ have suggested that when the pileup is excessively wide, callers are at fault because they are calling gradually farther away from the main part of the pileup. This is patently untrue. Saying “UP” after every QSO does NOT lead to an excessively wide pileup. DXers will generally call only a few kHz beyond where we are working stations. If we work no one say above 14.027, very few will call much above that frequency. It is solely the fault of the DXpedition operator if he continues to work stations farther and farther away from the main pileup.**

**9. Move receive frequency in a generally regular pattern.**

**It is advantageous for those calling in the pileup to have an indication of where to call next. A totally random tuning pattern by the DXpeditioner will increase the frustration within the pileup – something to be avoided. Although it is sometimes possible to work several stations on the same frequency, it will usually be necessary to move receive frequency after every few QSOs since many callers will quickly determine where we are listening, and it will be difficult to pick out a callsign. If we can escape the pileup by moving up just a few Hz after each QSO, that is good. If not, some other pattern may be needed.**

**Along with tuning pattern, it will be necessary to establish the limits of the pileup - that is, where we want the high end and the low end of the tuning range. We should not continually move the listening frequency up the band, as that will cause unnecessary QRM to non-DXpedition traffic. On SSB, we can tell the pile where we are listening: “Listening up five to ten.“ If we say that we are listening up five to ten, it is then mandatory that we do exactly that. Saying up five to ten and then not doing so is simply poor operating.**

**Alternatively, we can say “Call on 14.210”. By specifying several spot frequencies in succession, we can define the size of the pile. On CW, we can do something similar by telling the callers where to call. Remember, we must slow the CW in order to do this.**

**10. Repeat corrected call signs so everyone is confident of being correctly logged.**

**The primary goal of a DXpedition is to fill the log with call signs – correct call signs. We OWE DXers the opportunity to have their call signs in the log correctly, and we OWE them the knowledge that their calls are entered correctly in the log. If we do nothing else, we must do this. It is the primary goal of any DXpedition. Further, if we do not afford DXers this opportunity, we cannot complain when they make duplicate QSOs.**

**So, if we reply to a call-sign which we then realize needs correction we must  not only correct it in our log but we must also transmit the corrected call sign so that the caller is sure that he has been correctly logged.**

**11. Work and log dupes, it’s quicker.**

**As mentioned in 10 above, a duplicate QSO may well be a follow-up to a bad QSO or the perception of a bad QSO. In either case, we may be wrong. We owe it to the DXer to make sure that HE is satisfied that he is in the log.**

**Therefore, it is best practice to make the QSO and enter it in the log, even if we are convinced that it is a dupe. In the end, this is the quickest and most efficient solution. If a station insists on making multiple duplicate contacts, we might slow down, engage the operator and ask him why he continues to make QSOs on the same band and mode. One DXer once told me: “I don’t sure”. He was telling me that for whatever reason, he wasn’t sure he was in my log. Let’s make sure that he is sure!**

**12. Don't leave the pile-up hanging. Keep the callers informed about QRT/QSY, etc.**

**To reduce frustration, it is very important to inform the DXers of any changes in the status quo. That is if we decide to take a break, tell them. If we must change bands, tell them. If we QRX and plan to return, tell them. Do not tell them one thing and then do another, however. Giving them correct information will go a long way toward maintaining a “good relationship” between DXpeditioner and the calling DXers.**

**13. Maintain a moderate, but “in-charge” attitude.**

**As DXpedition operators, we are in the best position to control the pileup. Repeat “We are in the best position to control the pileup”. We should assume that responsibility and make the most of it. While we must be firm with callers, we must also follow our own rules and be consistent in our application of our own rules.**

**We should maintain a moderate attitude at all times, not becoming agitated or losing our temper. Doing so does no good, and usually causes a bad situation to escalate. If we must “blow up,” we should find another operator to take over as soon as possible.**