

W4PL System Guidelines for D-STAR Operations

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1. Don't be too quick on the key (we call that quick-keying)!
 - a. D-STAR needs time to make connections and that takes several seconds.
 - b. When in a QSO, wait several seconds before keying-up to reply.
 - c. After keying-up, allow 1 full second for data transfer before you start talking.

2. When you want to get the attention of others on the system:
 - a. Key up to send your CQCQCQ **and speak** your call sign.
 - b. Some might not be watching their screen while you transmit – they might be mobile or across the room, or just doing something other than watching their radio, so if you do not say your call sign, they might not know you even keyed up, and in any case they might not know who keyed up.
 - c. Remember that D-STAR repeaters and reflectors are often linked to other locations on the network. Check the DPLUS Dashboard for each to get an idea of who may be listening in. You may be talking to more than your local buddies! D-STAR is a bigger world than many are accustomed to using.

3. Want to initiate a new link or to change an existing link:
 - a. It is good form to announce your intention before doing it. Others may be listening and it's polite to inform them of the change you intend to make. If there are objections, consider alternatives if possible.
 - b. Once the new link is established, listen! You may have just jumped into an on-going conversation. If no QSO is heard, announce your presence by saying your call sign so that others will know you're there.
 - c. When you are finished with your linked QSO, restore the module to the same condition (or link) you found it in.

4. When talking to several people, keep the turn-overs smooth.
 - a. Give the person following you in the rotation the turn-over by saying their name or call sign.
 - b. Remember that you do not have to give your call sign every time you talk, just every 10 minutes. It's really annoying when you keep giving your call sign. Some older hams do this out of habit, when the FCC rules required that – it's been decades since the FCC required that!
 - c. It's polite to say your call sign at the beginning of a series of transmissions, not every time you talk!

5. **Important:** Do not use the GPS Auto-Beacon function while on a repeater or gateway. This will cause disruption of ongoing QSOs and much aggravation on the network.

6. **Important:** Do not link both modules (B & C) to the same repeater or reflector. This causes a serious problem with "hidden linking". Modules may appear to be unlinked on the dashboard but are actually still linked. This condition causes lots of confusion to network users.

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7. Use the **Echo** command to check your audio signal.
 - a. Repeaters and gateways have an Echo command. This gives you a playback of your transmission. This is the best way to know how you sound to others.
 - b. Example: You would have in "your" memory slot "W4PL E" (E is in the 8th space) Key up and say, "This is (say your call sign) ECHO test 1 2 3 4 5" or whatever. Unkey and the repeater will play it back.

8. Please watch your (round) table manners!
 - a. Do not join a conversation in progress, and then turn control over to the wrong person.
 - b. Learn the rotation before you join, or ask before you turn it over.
 - c. Make sure you designate someone to answer your question rather than just "tossing it up in the air!"
 - d. Do not quick-key to answer the previous speaker – you can't just inject comments on D-STAR.
 - e. Do not start a different rotation, leaving someone out of the QSO.

9. Remember the repeater needs time to finish data transmission and some radios are speaking the call sign of the last person to transmit - don't step on that or your transmission will cut it short.

10. Limit call sign routing to repeaters that are not connected to reflectors.

11. Remember Module B is linked to Reflector 030C (a regional reflector) so keep Module B free for the morning and afternoon commuters to chat.
 - a. If you do chat on Module B, stand by and take yourself out of the rotation after 10-15 minutes or so. Wait before jumping back in.
 - b. If practical, ask the participants in your QSO to move to another module or change to Module C if they are local.
 - c. If you move elsewhere, anyone interested in following you will do so. Others might be listening and tired of your topic and as many are likely to be mobile, they have limited time to be in range of a given repeater, so don't overstay your welcome.

12. Be kind, considerate, and courteous to all.