

QSL Managers Message

This month I want to talk about Ham Radio logging of the contacts you make. There are 6 things that every 3rd party QSL provider requires. Anything else is extra and ignored. Who are the 3rd party QSL providers?

1. LOTW – Logbook of the World – from ARRL
2. eQSL.cc
3. QRZ.com
4. and there are others – including POTA, Parks On The Air

The 6 things required in your log are...

- 1. Your call sign**
- 2. The call sign of the station you contacted**
- 3. Date**
- 4. Time – Zulu, Universal or GMT time only**
- 5. Band – don't need exact frequency**
- 6. Mode**

Wait a minute...what about a Signal Report? Even though everyone wants one it is not required for you to get a confirmation of a contact you make from a 3rd party QSL provider. The Signal Report is often called the RST – Readability, Signal Strength, Tone. It is represented by a series of numbers; for example – 599. Here is a description...

Readability

- 1--Unreadable
- 2--Barely readable, occasional words distinguishable.
- 3--Readable with considerable difficulty.
- 4--Readable with practically no difficulty.
- 5--Perfectly readable.

Signal Strength

- 1--Faint signals, barely perceptible.
- 2--Very weak signals.
- 3--Weak signals.
- 4--Fair signals.
- 5--Fairly good signals.
- 6--Good signals.
- 7--Moderately strong signals.
- 8--Strong signals.
- 9--Extremely strong signals.

The 3rd number is only used for CW so I won't bother explaining that because so few of us use CW.

So when you contact another operator they will ask you for their Signal Report, RST. Based on the definitions above you'll give them your subjective judgment. A set of numbers based on how you are hearing the other station. If a station is very strong and you have no difficulty understanding what the operator is saying you'll give them a Signal Report of 59. If a station is weak and you have a hard time understanding what they are saying you'll give them a Signal Report of 33. The RST is totally subjective and it is not verifiable. What is 59 to you may be 47 to someone else. Your 33 may be 11 to another person.

Because it can not be verified it is not required by anyone....except maybe the sponser of a contest. Often the contest provider will require something else...your name, member number, state, Grid Square, serial number, etc.

So you don't have to send a Signal Report to the 3rd party QSL provider to get a confirmation of a contact you made. Don't believe me? Send your 3rd party QSL provider a small log file with no signal reports for the contacts you made. They will accept it and I'll bet you'll still get confirmations.

Please remember the 6 things that are required and always send them to your 3rd party QSL provider.

But, don't worry about the Signal Report – it really doesn't mean anything to anyone – except maybe the other station you contacted.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

73

Lee N5SLY
lee.n5sly@gmail.com
903-818-7463