

2024 Spring VHF-UHF Field Day Rules

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Spring Event 2024 dates and times:

Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 November

Duration, all call areas other than VK6:

0100 UTC Saturday to 0059 UTC Sunday

Duration in VK6 only:

0400 UTC Saturday to 0359 UTC Sunday

Once I lived the life . . .

I once lived a ham's life, always on the air / Chased HF DX, whatever was there
Then one sorry day, the sunspots were low/ My poor HF rigs had no place to go
When I looked 'round the shack / there was no turning back
Took a 6-on-up rig atop a high hill / I called CQ contest, oh what a thrill

– after "Nobody knows you when you're down and out," by Mike Batt and Jimmie Cox

The event has distance-based scoring only.

About your contest strategy

Note that all the Sections and Sub-sections featured in past events remain, as do the two-hour re-work period and the exchange of 6-character locators for all contacts. Any stalwart Rovers have to travel from Square to Square, but their scoring is based on 6-character locators.

The **Single-band only** Sub-section is designed to encourage newly-licensed operators, those new to the bands above 30 MHz, those returning to the hobby after a period of absence, or any operator who takes it in mind to join in casually.

If you're in this group, but have your act rather more together, consider entering the **Four-bands Sub-section**. At a minimum, you can operate on any two of the bands 6m/2m/70cm/23cm, or three, or the whole four.

A founding principle of the Field Days is to spend time outdoors and have fun, so the Single-band and Four-bands Subsections meets that philosophy and provides a taste of that for newbies. Look out, you might get hooked!

For those who are 'old hands' at VHF-UHF Field Day *shenanigans*, why not invite a Foundation licensee or Standard to join you in the field. Or, invite either (or both!) to your home QTH for a few hours of the contest.

Likewise, if you know someone returning to the hobby, get them involved and mentor them through the process of making contest contacts. You never know what might happen.

Acquaint yourself with the **Contest Radar** website (www.contestradar.com). Enter your planned portable location (6-character locator), or your home QTH, along with other salient station details. The website will display your details on a map – along with the fleet of other stations doing the same. You can see at a glance who's where. Notably, the website is integrated with the VKCL logging software.

THE RULES

Sections

A: Portable station, single operator, 24 hours (A1) OR 8 hours (A2).

B: Portable station, multiple operators, 24 hours (B1) OR 8 hours (B2).

C: Home station, 24 hours (C1) OR 8 hours (C2).

D: Rover station, 24 hours (D1) OR 8 hours (D2).

Note that 8 hours means any period up to 8 hours (but the period must be contiguous); i.e, you can submit a log for a few contacts (even just one!). Likewise, "24 hours" means any period of more than 8 hours and up to 24 hours.

Sub-sections

(a) Single-band only: any single band permitted on the operator's licence.

(b) Four-bands: 6m/2m/70cm/23cm – any two, up to the four – only.

(c) All-bands: all bands 50 MHz-up permitted on the operator's licence.

For a variety of reasons, the use of non-voice digital modes for contacts is up to operators, but there is no longer a Sub-section in the contest and separate logs, scored separately, are no longer required.

Stations entering the all-bands sub-section cannot enter additional logs for the four-bands or single-band sub-sections.

A station operating on any number of bands cannot enter the single-band section for each band they use. *That's not in the spirit of this section!*

General Rules

There is no overall winner, **only top-scorers** in each section/sub-section. Top-scorers are entered into the annual WIA Contest Champion Peter Brown VK4PJ Trophy. Visit: www.wia.org.au/members/contests/contestchampionrules/

A Square refers to the Maidenhead Locator system definition, as denoted by the 4-character locator. This matters to Rovers, but no-one else.

All stations are required to exchange Sub-Square locations (i.e, the 6-character locator).

Operating periods:

Stations may elect to enter either a 24-hour section or an 8-hour section, but not both. Those stations entering the 8-hour sections may operate for more than eight hours, and nominate which 8-hour period they wish to claim for scoring purposes, **but the 8-hour (or lesser) period submitted has to be contiguous.**

Rover stations:

The Rover section is for all portable or mobile stations that operate from more than two Squares, (as specified by a 4-character locator) or that change Squares more than twice; i.e, Square A to Square B to Square C, etc, or A->B->A->B etc. However, a station in the field that is not entering as a Rover may move from Square A to Square B and return to Square A; e.g, to check another site (which may prove no good) then return to the original site.

Entering more than one section:

If a Portable or Rover station spends part of the contest period operating from their home station, they may also enter the Home station section.

Two operators:

If two operators set up a joint station with shared equipment, they may choose to enter Section A or C as separate stations under their own callsigns, or Section B under a single callsign. If they enter as separate stations, they may not claim contacts with each other.

Multi-operator stations:

Portable stations with more than two operators must enter Section B under one callsign. Operators of stations in Section B may not make contest exchanges using callsigns other than the club or group callsign.

Home stations may enter as a multi-operator station, but only one callsign can be used, and only one operator at any one time.

Operating Rules

One callsign per station. Operation may be from any location. A station is portable only if all of its equipment is transported to a place that is not the normal location of any amateur station. You may work stations within your own locator Square.

Portable stations may change location during the Field Day, provided that the station is dismantled and reassembled at each move.

Repeater, satellite, EME or crossband contacts are not permitted.

Except for CW, no contest operation is allowed below 50.150 MHz. Recognised DX calling frequencies must not be used for contest activity. Suggested procedure for SSB stations is to call on .150 or higher on each band, and QSY *up* to make the contest exchange.

About Contest Exchanges

For a valid contact, operators must exchange RS or RST reports, a serial number, and your **6-character** Maidenhead locator (the Sub-Square). The Maidenhead locator is optional if it has already been exchanged in a previous contact during the Field Day and neither station has moved since then.

For digital contacts, as RS or RST reports plus serial number make for a cumbersome exchange, it is sufficient to exchange callsigns and 6-character locators, plus two further digits that cannot be predicted by the other station.

This is similar to the practice used in the annual Ross Hull contest. However, when compiling your log to enter the contest, include a unique serial number for each successful contact.

Repeat Contacts – Re-work Period

Stations may be worked again on each band **after two hours have elapsed**. If either station moves to a new location in a different Square, repeat contacts may be made immediately. If the station moves back into the previous locator Square, the re-work period limit of two hours still applies to stations worked from that Square previously.

Your Log

Your log should cover the entire operating period and include the following information for each contact: UTC time, Frequency, Station worked, Serial numbers and locators exchanged. Identify your log using your callsign.

- All-band stations cannot submit a separate log for a single-band or four-band entry.
- Logs for a single-band operation must not include any contacts on other bands.
- Logs for a four-band operation must not include any contacts on other bands.
- Logs for multi-operator stations must include names and callsigns of all operators.

Scoring

All contacts are scored on the basis of one point per kilometre, multiplied by the scoring Multiplier for each band in Table 1, with points/100 km applied after 700 km for 6m, 2m and 70cm, to ‘flatten’ scores for DX experienced under enhanced propagation conditions. A 200 km contact on 432 MHz would be $200 \times 2.7 = 540$ points. A 1000 km contact on 50 MHz would be $703 \times 1.7 = 1195.1$ points¹. (The score is rounded up to the nearest point). **For Single-band and Four-bands entrants, note that the Multiplier for 6m is greater than that for 2m!**

The distance error of using Sub-Square (6-character) locators is small and accuracy is sufficient for the purposes of this event. Distance is calculated from the Sub-Square centre.

Table 1

Band	Multiplier	Distance Scoring
50 MHz	1.7	1 point / km to 700 km; thereafter 1 point / 100 km or part thereof
144 MHz	1.0	1 point / km to 700 km; thereafter 1 point / 100 km or part thereof
432 MHz	2.7	1 point / km to 700 km; thereafter 1 point / 100 km or part thereof
1296 MHz	3.7	1 point / km
2.3/2.4 GHz	4.4	1 point / km
3.4 GHz	5.4	1 point / km
5.7 GHz	6.4	1 point / km
10 GHz	7.4	1 point / km
24 GHz & up	10	1 point / km ~ given recent advancements, this is to be updated in future.

Total the scores for the band or bands used.

Submitting Your Logs

For direct import into log checking software with no transcription, logs in ASCII text format, as produced by VKCL, are preferred now. No cover sheet is required with these logs.

Note: If any operator participating in the contest has a genuine disability or other impediment preventing submission of an electronic log, a paper log will be accepted, provided it reaches the WIA National Office via post or fax by the deadline time and date.

The free VK Contest Log (VKCL) software, from Mike VK3AVV (SK), caters for the VHF-UHF Field Days as well as a host of other contests. You can download it from: www.mnds.com.au/vkcl/

Logs prepared by other electronic means, such as Word, PDF, etc. are also accepted, provided they are not too large a file size, but they will require transcription into the required format, which is error prone.

Such logs must be accompanied by a Cover Sheet, which clearly states: –

- the Contest event (i.e, Spring 2019 VHF-UHF Field Day) and its date;
- the relevant Section–Sub-section and the Period (24 hr or 8 hr);
- Name and Callsign of operator submitting the entry; Names and Callsigns of other operators for Multi-operator stations;
- contact email address; mailing address, and
- a declaration that the operator/s have abided by the rules.

Upload your logs via the WIA website Field Day Log File Uploader (VKCL has automated this), at: www.wia.org.au/members/contests/upload/

If you need to revise your log, upload it again. Only the last log uploaded is used.

Logs must be received by midnight EAST, Monday 9 December 2024.

Early logs would be appreciated.

Certificates

When certificate production can be re-instated, each top-scoring station in each Section–Sub-section is eligible to receive a colour certificate in PDF format, sent to the contact email address in their log details.

In addition, colour certificates will also be sent to the top-scoring Foundation station.

Check Website for Updates

Check for any updates or advisories on the VHF-UHF Field Days website at: www.wia.org.au/members/contests/vhfuhf/

The Next Event

Using “*An Algorithm to Determine VHF-UHF Field Day Dates*” (on the website), the **Summer 2025 event** will be held over **Saturday 18** and **Sunday 19 January**.

References

1. Roger Harrison VK2ZRH, *The basis of distance-based scoring for the VHF-UHF Field Days*, Amateur Radio, June 2014, pp 11-13. Also posted on the VHF-UHF Field Days web page.