



Parks on the Air

Getting Started with POTA

Parks on the Air® (POTA) started in early 2017 when the ARRL's National Parks on the Air special event ended. A group of volunteers wanted to continue the fun beyond the one-year event, and thus, POTA was born.

General information about the program is available at parksontheair.com, so we highly recommend checking out the information there. You may also want to join the POTA Slack Channel or the POTA Facebook group, where you can easily interact with the POTA community online. POTA also maintains accounts on Twitter and Mastodon if you prefer to interact on those social media platforms.

Once you're ready to start, just remember that the golden rules of POTA are to have fun and keep it simple. We want to give you as much flexibility as possible, to have fun your way.

Getting started with POTA can happen via one of two paths — as an “Activator” who heads out into the parks or as a “Hunter” who is trying to contact someone in a park.

The easiest way to start participating in POTA is as a Hunter, so we'll start there.



<https://pota.app/#/signup>

Parks on the Air (POTA) uses AWS Cognito to manage our account authentication information. This provides all parties with a flexible and secure method of signing into POTA.

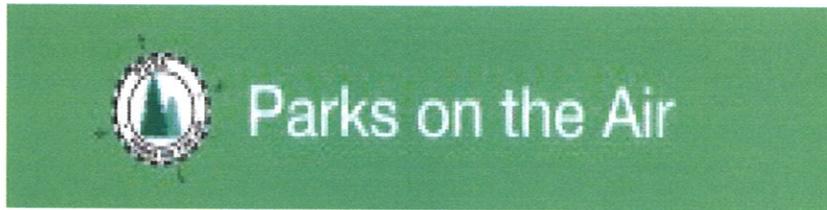
Get started by creating a Cognito account using the sign in method of your choice. You can choose to authenticate with your Amazon, Google, or Facebook accounts, or create a unique username and password just for POTA. No matter which method you choose, POTA does not have access to your account or social media data.

To use Amazon, Google, or Facebook, click the corresponding "Continue with ..." on left side of the Sign In page.

To use a unique username and password, look for the text "Need an account? Sign up" at the bottom right of the Sign In page. After setting your email and password, you will need to verify your account by clicking the link you receive in your email.

After creating your account, if you are not automatically redirected back to this page, follow the pop-up prompt on the Spots page to get back to this page and go to the next step.

EMAILS AND PASSWORDS ARE CASE SENSITIVE! Please pay attention to the case you are using for your email, especially if you are signing up on a mobile device which automatically capitalizes the first letter of words.



Getting Started for Hunters

Hunters are the individuals located anywhere, who contact the Activators in the park. As a Hunter, the rules are few and simple.

- Follow the law.
- Follow the DX Code of Conduct.
- Follow the Golden Rule.

The first place to start as a hunter is to head to <https://pota.app>. The home page you land on will be the spotting page, which lets you know who is on the air, what parks they are in, and what frequencies and modes they are currently operating on.

The screenshot shows the POTA app interface. At the top, there's a green header with the POTA logo and a search bar. Below that, the 'Active Spots' section is displayed, with a refresh button and a timer indicating 'Data will refresh in 53 seconds'. There are several filter buttons: 'Band: All 91', 'Mode: All 91', 'Program: All 91', 'QRT: Show 91', 'Hunted: Show 91', and 'Sort: Time'. Two active spots are listed:

Spot 1	Spot 2
KN6UNL @ US-1177	K2MJP @ US-2153
US-1177 Mount San Jacinto State Park	US-2153 Valley Stream State Park
US-CA	US-NY
24940 kHz	14044.5 kHz (CW)
KN6AUV	NU4F-#
5/9	RBN 22 dB 21 WPM via NU4F-#
Last heard 9 sec ago at 21:16 UTC	Last heard 10 sec ago at 21:16 UTC

At the bottom of each spot, there are 'RE-SPOT' buttons with circular arrows and a count (8 for the first spot, 13 for the second).

Spin the dial, and answer their call if you can hear them. If you make a contact, you've officially started in POTA! That's all there is to it!

While at <https://pota.app>, click the "sign up" button to create an account, which will let you see your progress towards certificates and awards based on the logs that the activators you contacted submit. POTA is on the honor system, based exclusively on activator logs, so as a hunter, you don't have to lift a finger (Other than the one that hits your key or PTT!).

If a Hunter is also at a designated POTA park, the Hunter is also an Activator and the QSO becomes a "Park to Park" (P2P). All other activator rules have to be followed for it to be a valid park to park QSO. See our Park to Park page for more info (https://docs.pota.app/docs/activator_reference/park_2_park.html).



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Getting Started for Activators

Activators are the individuals that pack up their portable gear and head out to a park, and set up a station. After you've done some hunting, you might want to take a shot at activating. The rules for activators are still fairly simple:

- Follow the law
- Follow the DX Code of Conduct
- Follow the Golden Rule
- Leave no trace
- Follow any instructions from park rangers you encounter
- Be courteous of the public space you are using
- You must have an account registered at <https://pota.app>
- You and all your equipment must be within the boundaries of the park(s)
- You must submit a log after your activation is complete.
 - ADIF or Manual Entry
- Follow the Rules detailed here (docs.pota.app)

Once familiar with the rules, head to the map <https://pota.app/#/map>. Allow location services to quickly zoom to your location, or use the drop-downs to choose an entity and location. The yellow dots are approximate locations of parks in your area. Check official sources (park websites etc.) and ensure you are within the park's boundary.

Once you've chosen a location in the park, set up your gear, find a quiet frequency, and start calling CQ. While doing your initial CQ calls, you'll want to head to <https://pota.app> and click the button to add a spot. Once you've spotted yourself, the hunters will probably come fast and furious, so be prepared to start logging your QSOs!

After completing the Activation, head to the "My Log Uploads" section of the website (You'll find that under your callsign in the menu) and use the file dialog to upload your logs. You'll see your stats within a few hours, and any earned awards will start to populate through. At this point, you can sit back and congratulate yourself on joining the ranks as an Activator!

Band Plan by Class

General Class Band Plan			
Band	Mode	Low end Freq	High end Freq
160M	All	1.800	2.000
80M	CW/Data	3.525	3.600
80M	Voice/Image	3.800	4.000
40M	CW/Data	7.025	7.125
40M	Voice/Image	7.175	7.300
20M	CW/Data	14.025	14.150
20M	Voice/Image	14.225	14.350
17M	CW/Data	18.068	18.110
17M	Voice/Image	18.110	18.168
15M	CW/Data	21.025	21.200
15M	Voice/Image	21.275	21.450
12M	CW/Data	24.890	24.930
12M	Voice/Image	24.930	24.990
10M	CW/Data	28.000	28.300
10M	Voice/Image	28.300	29.700
6M	CW	50.000	50.100
6M	Voice/Image	50.100	54.000

Created by N7NDR – 2017

Extra Class Band Plan			
Band	Mode	Low end Freq	High end Freq
160M	All	1.800	2.000
80M	CW/Data	3.500	3.600
80M	Voice/Image	3.600	4.000
40M	CW/Data	7.000	7.125
40M	Voice/Image	7.125	7.300
20M	CW/Data	14.000	14.150
20M	Voice/Image	14.150	14.350
17M	CW/Data	18.068	18.110
17M	Voice/Image	18.110	18.168
15M	CW/Data	21.000	21.200
15M	Voice/Image	21.200	21.450
12M	CW/Data	24.890	24.930
12M	Voice/Image	24.930	24.990
10M	CW/Data	28.000	28.300
10M	Voice/Image	28.300	29.700
6M	CW	50.000	50.100
6M	Voice/Image	50.100	54.000

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Activators using the General Class Band Plan will get more Hunters



Parks on the Air

The “My Log Uploads” section

- What is required in a POTA Log?

POTA has just Five required data fields that Must be in your log for it to be accepted and Five secondary fields for particular situations. The fields are labeled with “Tags” as they’re called.

The five required fields are: **CALL** (callsign you receive) **QSO_DATE**, **TIME_ON**, **MODE** and **BAND**. These are self-explanatory. No other fields are needed but may be in it without harm.

For a simple activation by one operator in a single park this set is enough to get your log processed without issue. You still only need these five data sets, just remember to change the date and put the correct UTC time when logging or transcribing from paper!

- One Call, Different Operators (Club activations)

The remaining pair of fields are not commonly used and often forgotten. They are **STATION_CALLSIGN** and **OPERATOR**. These are used when there are two or more calls associated with an activation.

- One Park, more than one geographical location

If you activate a park that is in more than one state / province / territory, you should include the specific location in the file field labeled **MY_STATE**.

- How do I log a multi-park activation properly, so all credits are given?

This situation is commonly referred to as 2fers, 3fers etc.. and logging is very simple for these.

If you are using ADIF logging you can create one initial log for Any of the Park Numbers you’re activating, it makes no difference which – just make sure it is identified in the **MY_SIG_INFO** field when initiating the log so it carries over to each entry.

If you are using paper logging, then you submit a separate log for each Park Number.

Popular POTA Logging software for generating the ADIF files in the format POTA website needs.



PoLo, short for Portable Logger, is a mobile application for amateur radio operators to log their contacts on the go. It is designed to be simple, fast, and easy to use, with a focus on the most important features for logging contacts.

It supports multiple activation types such as: POTA - Parks On The Air, SOTA - Summits On The Air, WWFF - Worldwide Flora & Fauna, Field Day, Winter Field Day, and many more.

<https://polo.ham2k.com/>

<https://hamrs.app/>



Amateur Contact Log Features:

- Very easy and intuitive to use!
- Tracking of Worked All States, Worked All Counties, Worked All Countries, DXCC, VUCC, Grids, Zones, IOTAs, Lighthouses and many other achievements.
- Upload QSOs directly to eQSL, QRZ and Club Log.
- Easily customizable for Parks on the Air (POTA) operations!
- Windows only software

<https://www.n3fjp.com/aclog.html>



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References

- Visit POTA Docs (<https://docs.pota.app/>) for more info.
- Help / Getting Started - FAQs section is now on POTA Docs (<https://docs.pota.app/>)
- Start your journey at www.parksontheair.com
- Getting Started with POTA video on Youtube - <https://youtu.be/odegfaGczAc>
- POTA recommend / Support the N3FJP ACLog software and have very clear instructions on setting it up for POTA use. In Fact, the developer, Scott Davis, created a POTA Template at our request.
- A great video by Matt Herre, N3NWV, on how to customize your ACLog application can be viewed here - youtu.be/VePKcyP8ppw
- Instructions for ACLog in general can be viewed Here - youtu.be/aIaNKCKkstM
- To download ACLog, follow this link - www.n3fjp.com/aclog.html
- Paper POTA Log Sheet pdf is available at https://docs.pota.app/assets/documents/POTA_Logsheet_v1.2.pdf

- The official Parks on the Air® Book



- The Parks on the Air® Book explores the process of activating a park unit and hunting those activations. Through the experiences of 14 operators, it offers advice and motivation for taking your radio out to the park and becoming active in the growing POTA community.
- Produced in conjunction with ARRL

POTA - QUICK SHEET

<https://pota.app/>

https://docs.pota.app/docs/cw_guide.html

(ACTIVATOR) CALLING CQ

YOU ARE CALLING CQ	HUNTER RESPONDING TO YOUR CQ
CQ CQ POTA DE [UR CALL] K	
	[HUNTER'S CALL]
[HUNTER'S CALL] [GM / GA / GE] UR [RST x 2] BK	
	BK RR UR [RST x 2] [HUNTER'S STATE X 2] BK
BK TU [HUNTER'S STATE] 73 DE [UR CALL] (DIT DIT)	
	(DIT DIT)

* **Note:** The operator at the park typically does not send the park number. However, if the operator sends something like "US 2943" when they come back to the hunter, they are telling you the park number.

Additionally, you may hear something like "P2P", where this stands for a "Park To Park" contact.

ALTERNATIVELY

(HUNTER) ANSWERING A CQ

SOMEONE CALLING CQ	YOU ARE RESPONDING TO SOMEONE'S CQ
CQ CQ POTA DE [CQer's CALL] K	
	[UR CALL]
[HUNTER'S CALL] [GM / GA / GE] UR [RST x 2] BK	
	BK RR UR [RST x 2] [UR STATE X 2] BK
BK TU [HUNTER'S STATE] 73 DE [CQer's CALL] (DIT DIT)	
	(DIT DIT)

Legend:

[Red Text] – Replace with your own station information.

[Blue Text] – Information you expect to hear or use from the other station.

[Purple Text] - Conditional text for info like good morning, afternoon, or evening; and the RST you intend to send to the other station.

<TEXT> - Text within this is a Prosign.

Morse Walker - https://morsewalker.com/?utm_source=amateur-radio-weekly (LICW – Digest #3926)

POTA Kit

N7EJP

Radio:

- FT-710 Field

Tuner:

- No External Tuner – A tuner is built into the FT-710

Antenna Kit:

- 10m Mastwerks Mast from Buddipole
- Dipole adapter – Opek AM-1102
- Hamsticks – One Pair for each band
 - 10m, 15m, 20m

Battery:

- 12V, 50Ah LFP Battery
- Megabox 2
- SS30DV power supply
 - For use at parks with available power outlets

Cabling:

- 50ft coax with chokes
 - 218XATC-YEL-PL-50-5FERRITE

POTA Kit

N7NDR

Radio:

- FT-891

Tuner:

- LDG Z100PLUS

Antenna Kit:

- Chameleon Antenna CHA HYBRID MICRO 60FT
- Chameleon Antenna CHA SS 17
- Chameleon Antenna CHA JAWMOUNT

Battery:

- 12V, 20Ah LFP Battery
- Standard Battery Box with:
 - PanelPole 2
 - PanelQCDual

Cabling:

- LDG YACC-1: Tuner control cable
- 218XATCPL1.5: Tuner to Radio
- 218XATCPL25: Tuner to Antenna

Notes: Storage bin large enough to fit all this also works as field table