

Summits on the Air

Guidelines for Activators



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What's it all about then?

SOTA is an international programme that encourages amateur radio operation from the summits of hills and mountains. Activators are the people who transmit from the summits. Chasers are the people who contact the activators. Short Wave listeners can also take part, by logging QSOs between activators and chasers.

The activator is at the heart of the SOTA programme, since without activators there would be no QSOs! This publication is intended to provide the basic information that is required by Activators. It is only a guide and the full rules for the entire SOTA programme can be found in publication S0.1 – General Rules.

As an activator, you will be climbing qualifying SOTA summits and making QSOs from the top. The first thing you need to know is what summits qualify and for this you need the Association Reference Manual (ARM) for the area in which you plan to climb. This contains useful local information, summit scores and, of course, a list of the qualifying summits. ARMs can be downloaded from the SOTA web site.

Some simple rules

For your expedition to be valid, you have to keep to some simple rules, as follows:

- You must use legitimate access routes and obtain landowners' permission if necessary.
- Operation from vehicles is not permitted and the method of final access to the Summit must be "person powered", e.g. hiking, mountain biking.
- You must operate from a portable power source (e.g. batteries, solar cells). Fossil fuel based generators are not allowed. All equipment must be carried by you to the summit.
- At least four QSOs must be made for you to claim your activator points. You should exchange callsigns, reports and the SOTA reference number (see ARM). QSOs through a repeater do not count. QSOs with others on the same summit do not count.
- Activator points can only be claimed by the holder of the callsign used on the summit. You need to send in your log to claim your points.
- You can only claim each summit once in each calendar year.

Operating guidelines

All modes and amateur radio bands are valid for SOTA. You can use whatever equipment you like, provided it complies with your licence conditions. A scoring system is implemented, generally relating to the height of the Summit. The score for each Summit is shown in the ARM. A seasonal bonus may be available to Activators. Details are contained in the ARM.

As an activator, you should always operate in a considerate manner. Avoid any damage to the mountain, walls, buildings, etc. Take your litter home with you. Be considerate of other people on the hill – e.g. do not string antennas across footpaths; use headphones rather than the loudspeaker and so on.

Be sure that you are competent to undertake your proposed Expedition and carry suitable equipment, taking account of the terrain, weather conditions, etc. You activate mountains entirely at your own risk and the SOTA programme accepts no responsibility for injury, loss of life or any other loss.

Awards

Certificates and plaques are awarded to recognise achievement in SOTA. Certificates will be awarded for 100, 250 and 500 points. The "Mountain Goat" trophy is available for Activators who attain 1000 points. Further certificates are issued for progress beyond 1000 points.