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## POTA LOGGING MADE EASY

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A concise and simplified description of how to create a log for your activation.  
Based on having submitted hundreds of activation logs and processing thousands  
of logs from others like you!

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To ensure problem free processing, remember to always double check your log based  
on the information contained herein before sending it to your area coordinator.

*The integrity of your log is Your responsibility*

JAMES GALLO, KB2FMH  
Your Friendly Area 2 Logging Coordinator / Activator

## - Why is logging for Parks on the Air so complicated?

That is a question often asked by both veteran and new Amateur operators upon joining the program. They are accustomed to just entering a call into a computer / web based logging application and that's it – the computer does the rest.

Well, the answer is: It isn't complicated at all. There are some very easy to follow parameters (Rules if you like that word) that are in place to make sure every log entered goes the right way and both activators and hunters get the award credits due them.

Yes, it is an award driven program in a way so to ensure the integrity of the program certain simple rules are in place, easily found on the main website, parksontheair.com, under the Help / Getting Started section.

But this is about logging only so let's go....

POTA has a log sorting system that uses the common "Amateur Data Interchange Format" (ADIF) file type which is used to exchange information between logging programs and log databases such as QRZ, eQSL, LoTW etc. It is uniform and simple.

For the purpose of continuity, POTA uses this format so any logging program an activator may use will be compatible with our system.

## - How does an ADIF log work?

Imagine a spreadsheet such as that used in software like Excel or the like; there are columns and rows. In an ADIF file the columns are called Fields and the Rows are where the data goes. Software that reads ADIF files is designed to look for particular fields, labeled in the top row (header) of each column, then it extracts the information from those fields to essentially read the log and sort the information accordingly. The result is what you see in your activator or hunter logs as well as your activity stats and award allocations.

## - What is required in a POTA Log?

POTA has five required data fields that Must be in your log for it to be accepted and four 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. Even if you crossover into another UTC Day (what is referred to as Late Shift, described in detail in the FAQs) 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!

## - What are the other fields for?

The first set of "optional" fields come into play if you get a call of Park to Park (P2P). Many will tell you that they aren't needed, the system catches them automatically, and in essence it Should but, it doesn't Always so these fields are insurance in a way, making sure the cross reference is applied. Remember, insurance never hurts to have.

These fields are MY\_SIG\_INFO and SIG\_INFO. "SIG" meaning Special Interest Group.

Your park ID: Location appropriate letter(s) (*K, JA, VK, PA*), a dash (-) and 4 number set, is put in MY\_SIG\_INFO. This field is the same for Every contact whether a P2P or not. If you have no P2Ps, it is ignored but, when you get that call of "park to park" in your radio, you will put the "other" operator's park in the field labeled SIG\_INFO and together these two fields ensure your P2P is credited (*as long as the other operator sends in a log of course*).

## - What are the Other optional fields?

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 – Example:

The We Love Radio Club of Galifray activates a POTA entity for its anniversary using the club call, W1WHO, as the on air callsign. Club member N1ABC is at the mic / key. Both the club and the operator are registered with individual POTA accounts.

Since the club call is the one given on air to incoming calls / hunters, it is put in the field STATION\_CALLSIGN and N1ABC is put in OPERATOR. These fields are carried through with each entry by your logging application when put in during the initial setup for that park's specific log.

When submitted and processed, the club and the operator get credit for the activation, but hunters get credit for the actual contact with the club call only, since it was a single contact. If the operator Also gives his / her call, then a separate log must be submitted for each call.

If operators are changed during the activation the OPERATOR field must be updated with the different call when the change occurs..

## - What about Multi Operators that are not in a club?

When two or more operators activate a park, presuming they all make the same contacts, a single log can be replicated for each and named accordingly for each callsign (*more about naming later*).

## - 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. 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. Of course, any P2Ps during this activation go in the SIG\_INFO field as usual.

When complete, open the log in any text editing software – I use Notepad in Windows or ADIF Master which is an application for reading and editing ADIF files. Find the MY\_SIG\_INFO field if using ADIF Master and select all cells in the column. Right click in one of the selected cells and choose Replace in Selection. It should show the park number in the find box, and you put the second (and third if needed) park number in the “Replace With” box, apply the changes and click FILE > “Save As” and rename the file with the new park number (*presuming you saved and correctly named the initial log*).

In Notepad, which is on every Windows based computer, open the file, then EDIT > Replace, put the initial park number in the Find What box, put the *other* park(s) in the Replace With box and click Replace All. Close that dialog window and again, FILE > Save As, changing the park number in the filename accordingly.

## - Do I need to make separate files if I use different modes?

Absolutely not. Whether you operated with all SSB or a mix of SSB, CW, FT4/8, Satellite and PSK31 (*or Any mode you like*) you only make One file for a given park. As long as you entered the data accordingly for each mode, our system will sort it out during processing – we're That good!

## - What's with the file naming rules – why can't I name it My Way?

Our hope is to have the ability to allow activators to upload and process logs themselves and it is coming in the near future as the back-end software is being developed. Many say, “Why can't we do it ourselves like we do with QRZ or eQSL or Club Log?” and the answer is, our system is very different. Those online log storage sites just take contacts and match them to others within their database, and generate single type awards for certain criteria, but minimal. The POTA system does a lot more! Your submitted log gets parsed to many different sub programs that sort for accumulated awards, p2p credits, late shifts, new parks, Kilos, repeat offender, Op to Op and many more as most of you know. Creating a portal for each of our members takes time,

we've got thousands of members worldwide and new entities are being added as we grow. The interface for the few area coordinators was not an easy build in itself.

### - **Naming your files:**

Now, to the naming issue: In preparing for self-uploading a standard had to be agreed upon for the developers to work with thus, a standard filename format was mandated to get everyone ready for when self-uploading is implemented. The standard is as such – **callsign@park#-yyyymmdd**. An example using one of my own activations would look like this: KB2FMH@K-8088-20220202.adi which was an activation at park K-8088 on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

Now here is another “Rule”. If you activate a park that is in more than one state / province / territory, you Must indicate that in the filename by inserting the two-letter designator in the Park Number therefore the example would read as KB2FMH@K-0680NY-20220202.adi because the park K-0680 is in both NY and NJ and I was in the NY section.

There are many parks, historic trails and rivers that span multiple locations in all countries, so it is Your Job to know where you were and put it in the filename, not in the email message, not in the subject line, only in the filename as part of the park ID. Coordinators are not mind readers.

### - **How should I send my files?**

To make it easy for area coordinators while we wait for the self-uploading to come, put the Complete filename in the email subject line, and Nothing else. Don't write “My pota logs”, or “from my activation”. Just the Complete filename in the format it is written. When you send multiple files in an email, put the Oldest file's name in the subject.

If you are sending more than one file for a Single Park, YOU must combine them into a Single File, even if you activate it over several days it is One Park / One File. Do Not send multiple files for an individual park. Your coordinator has enough to do processing logs daily, they don't need additional work combining your logs or uploading the same park's log repeatedly in the same session.

Subject line example, using the multi-state sample above –

**FROM:** *k2@parksontheair.com*

**SUBJECT:** [KB2FMH@K-0680NY-20220202.adi](#)

### - **What if I made a mistake, how do I send the repaired log?**

If you find you need a log replaced due to an error of any kind, the format would be to amend the filename by putting the letter “B” in the park number. Example: replacement K-1234 would become K-1234B. This is for two reasons. With the “New” filename in the subject it is clear that it is a replacement file rather than new And, it will allow both files to be kept by your coordinator without overwriting the original.

Describe your need in the message body, putting Only the replacement file's name in the subject as you would with any other activation logs.

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**If you have Any questions that are Not answered in this document or the FAQs / Help section on the web, ask your call area coordinator Before doing anything – we're here to help.**

**Please, do not rely on hearsay from others or the *Facebook experts*. The people who built the system and use it daily know how it works and what is required , that's why they are doing it.**

**Now get out and Activate!**