

Work through this block by block. Blocks A and B are done at home, C to E in the field, F afterwards. The most common mistakes are at the end. Read those at least once before your first activation.

A · At home, the night before

A1 · Choose the location

- ☐ Reference chosen (ONFF number), or deliberately “no reference” for plain portable
- ☐ Boundaries checked against the official ONFF KMZ. Will I really be inside?
- ☐ Gridsquare of the location looked up (6 characters, e.g. JO20qe)
- ☐ Access and parking checked; is permission needed?

A2 · TQSL

- ☐ Station Location created for this site, under ON3VZ/P
- ☐ Named by convention: place or reference + grid, e.g. ONFF-0599 Alouette JO20xx
- ☐ DXCC Belgium · CQ 14 · ITU 27 · correct gridsquare

A3 · Log4OM

- ☐ Configuration ON3VZ-P portable loaded, not the shack configuration
- ☐ Station Callsign = ON3VZ/P
- ☐ Operator Callsign = ON3VZ
- ☐ Station Gridsquare = today's grid
- ☐ Station configuration: QMX + Band Hopper IV, power 5 W
- ☐ LoTW Station ID points to the correct Station Location
- ☐ For a WWFF activation: My Sig = WWFF, My Sig Info = ONFF-xxxx
- ☐ Without WWFF: leave My Sig and My Sig Info empty
- ☐ Test QSO entered, ADIF fields verified, test QSO deleted again

A4 · WSJT-X

- ☐ Configuration Portable loaded
- ☐ My Call = ON3VZ/P
- ☐ My Grid = today's grid
- ☐ Rig = QRPLabs QMX on the correct COM port, PTT method = CAT
- ☐ Poll interval 2 to 3 s, not the default 10 s
- ☐ “Halt Tx when SWR is above 2.5” enabled, PWR and SWR display on
- ☐ Audio in and out = USB sound card of the QMX
- ☐ UDP forwarding to Log4OM enabled
- ☐ PSK Reporter spotting enabled, so reach is measured even without QSOs
- ☐ Hamlib on a stable release, not a release candidate
- ☐ Auto Seq enabled, so message sequencing runs by itself
- ☐ “Disable Tx after sending 73” unchecked, so CQ resumes without a click

Tx Watchdog stops transmission after 6 quiet minutes. That is a safety feature, not a fault.

A5 · PoLo, for SSB and later CW

- ☐ Operator call ON3VZ, station call ON3VZ/P
- ☐ New activation created with the correct reference
- ☐ Power set to 5 W
- ☐ Offline datafiles refreshed, so callsign lookup works without a network

- ☐ Self-spotting enabled

A6 · Backup and power

- ☐ Log4OM database exported to OneDrive
- ☐ TQSL backup up to date
- ☐ Battery, laptop, phone and power bank all fully charged

B · Packing

Radio

- ☐ QMX + USB-C cable
- ☐ Battery, cables and fuse
- ☐ DC-DC buck converter and Powerpole leads
- ☐ Headphones
- ☐ G7UFO Turret microphone (for SSB)

Antenna

- ☐ Band Hopper IV. The 80 m section stays coiled on its winders
- ☐ Tactical 7000hds mast + ground spike or tripod
- ☐ Guy lines and pegs
- ☐ Coax, kept as short as possible
- ☐ Clip-on ferrites for the feedline
- ☐ SWR meter or analyser
- ☐ Throw line in case the mast cannot be used

Logging

- ☐ Laptop + charger (for FT8)
- ☐ iPad or phone with PoLo (for SSB)
- ☐ Paper backup log and pen. Always works

Everything else

- ☐ Chair or mat, rain gear, water, food
- ☐ Phone with the ONFF KMZ available offline
- ☐ Camera or phone for the mandatory photos

C · On site, before the first QSO

Power

- ☐ Converter output read at 11.50 V on its own display, before the radio is connected

The QMX accepts 6.0 to 12.0 V. A charged 12 V LiFePO4 sits above 13 V.

Antenna

- ☐ GPS check: am I inside the boundaries of the reference?
- ☐ Antenna up, links set for the starting band
- ☐ Same number of links closed on BOTH legs, counted on both sides
- ☐ Dipole ends out of reach of walkers, at least 2 m high
- ☐ SWR measured before the first transmission. The QMX has no ATU

Software

- ☐ Log4OM: correct configuration? Check the title bar
- ☐ WSJT-X: correct call and grid? Check the title bar
- ☐ Clock synchronised. FT8 fails without accurate time
- ☐ Photos taken: at least two, or one with GPS location

Without photos ONFF will reject your log. Do this now, not afterwards.

D · During the activation

Every session

- ☐ Self-spot posted, with the reference and “5W QRP” in the comment
- ☐ Park-to-park: the other station’s reference noted
- ☐ At least 60 minutes on the air, counted from the first QSO

Sending a custom message instead of 73

- ☐ Type it only once the QSO has reached the 73 stage
- ☐ Untick Auto Seq for that one transmission
- ☐ Tick Auto Seq back on immediately afterwards

Forget the last step and automatic sequencing quietly stops for the rest of the session.

After every band change

- ☐ Links changed on BOTH legs, counted
- ☐ SWR measured again before transmitting
- ☐ WSJT-X dial frequency matches the radio
- ☐ Self-spot repeated

Daylight band plan

Where to start

- 20 m** The daytime workhorse. Widest reach, most hunters active
- 40 m** Early morning and late afternoon. Where the Benelux hunters are
- 30 m** When 20 and 40 disappoint. No contests, no SSB

E · Packing up

Before driving off

- ☐ Time of the last QSO noted
- ☐ Antenna and mast fully recovered, nothing left behind
- ☐ All pegs pulled out of the ground
- ☐ Rubbish taken along
- ☐ Log exported or synchronised

F · At home, after the activation

F1 · Consolidate the log

- ☐ For SSB: export ADIF from PoLo and import into Log4OM
- ☐ For FT8: QSOs are already in Log4OM via UDP, verify
- ☐ Check MY_SIG and MY_SIG_INFO, or add them in bulk
- ☐ Check TX_PWR = 5 on all QSOs
- ☐ Clean up duplicates and errors

F2 · Upload

- ☐ LoTW, using the correct Station Location for that day
- ☐ QRZ Logbook ON3VZ/P
- ☐ Club Log, under the call ON3VZ/P
- ☐ QRZCQ

F3 · WWFF

- ☐ Export ADIF containing only the QSOs of this activation
- ☐ Filename exactly: on3vz_p@ONFF-xxxx YYYYMMDD.adf
- ☐ Attach photos, maximum 600 px, or one photo with GPS position
- ☐ Email to onfflogapproval@gmail.com
- ☐ Mention "5W QRP" in the email. This triggers the QRP exception to the 44 QSOs
- ☐ Is there also a POTA reference? Then upload to POTA separately

F4 · Back to the home configuration

- ☐ Log4OM back on the shack configuration
- ☐ WSJT-X back on the home configuration
- ☐ CAT ports back to the IC-7300 (COM5 / COM6)

The mistakes people make most often

Mistake	Consequence
Forgetting to switch configuration	QSOs in the wrong logbook and the wrong call sent to LoTW
Leaving the old gridsquare in place	Wrong distances and an incorrect location in your confirmations
Taking no photos	ONFF rejects the log, and you only find out once you are home
Wrong filename for WWFF	The log is not processed; the filename is the duplicate check
Transmitting without measuring SWR after a band change	Risk of damage to the PA. The QMX has no ATU
Connecting the radio straight to the battery	Over 13 V into a radio rated 6.0 to 12.0 V. Regulate to 11.50 V first
Different links closed on the two dipole legs	Not a dipole any more. High SWR and current on the outside of the coax
Leaving the WSJT-X poll interval at 10 s	Transmitting on the previous band's dial frequency after a change
Leaving Auto Seq off after a custom Tx5 message	Automatic sequencing stops silently for the rest of the session