

W4NC POTA Quick start Guide

The W4NC POTA (Parks on the Air) kit contains everything an individual or group needs for a successful POTA activation except the actual radio. For normal use, we recommend the club Icom 706 MKII G. Both the POTA kit and the radio are available to all FARC members in good standing through the club Loaner program. To arrange for borrowing the equipment, please contact the Loaner coordinator, Sam Poindexter NI4TG or Ken Kayser K2KXK, the POTA coordinator. Contact information for both is obtainable through qrz.com.

The POTA equipment is stored in a plastic bin containing everything listed in Appendix A for this guide, POTA Equipment list. Before activating, please check the contents. It is also recommended that you charge both the POTA battery and the laptop the day before your activation (see Charging instructions below). You must also have a valid POTA account which can be obtained for free at www.pota.app. If you are doing an individual activation (or with a buddy), it suggested you use your own call(s). If you are doing a club activation, you should use the club call, W4NC. This is your decision. It is suggested that you review the basic information on pota.app prior to your activation. Remember, to activate a park, it must have an official POTA registration number listed on their web site.

Once you have selected your park, make sure it will be accessible when you want to activate. I have found that a recon visit talk to an authority has greatly help. For example, I learned that on Weekends, the Summit Parking at Pilot Mountain is restricted so get there early. It also gives you an idea where you may set up the station.

This guide will not explain how to use the gear in the kit. Download the manuals for whichever radio you are going to use (the club Icom 706 has a manual packed in the case, the MFJ Antenna Analyzer (MFJ-259B) and any other gear. The PAC-12 antenna in the kit has the instructions in the case. Please make sure the any instruction you use get back in their cases.

Using and charging the battery

The W4NC POTA battery box was designed and built specifically for the club. It consists of a 20Ahr battery, a multifunction meter, a charger and various outlets including Powerpoles, USB, and cigarette lighter socket. It also has a Powerpole charging socket on the side. Below is a picture of the top of the battery box. As previously mentioned, you should charge the battery before your activation and also, after your activation so it is charged for the next member. To charge, plug the charger Powerpole into the side socket marked charge and plug the charger into 115V AC. There are 4 green lights on the charger that will blink until the battery is fully

charged. The charger gets quite warm so be careful during the charging. The “Energy” field on the meter displays the battery use since the last reset in Watt Hours. After charging, it is important to reset the meter to zero. To reset, turn on the switch and hold the button down for about 5 seconds until it says Clr. Then release the button and it will show the current Watt Hours. Press the button again and it will reset to zero. You can then turn off the switch. If you have any problems resetting, turn the switch off and start again.



In addition to the battery, please charge the laptop after using.

Logging

If you are using the POTA laptop, the logging program HAMRS is already loaded. If you are doing an individual activation, you need to add a profile for your call. In a club activation, use the W4NC profile. Create a new log file and BE SURE to use the POTA template. When done, you can export your log to an adif file and upload it to pota.app. If a club activation, send the adif file to Ken, K2KXK for upload.

Appendix A W4NC POTA Equipment List

Date borrowed: _____ Borrowed by: _____

Date returned: _____ Returned by: _____

Park: _____ Activation Date _____

Approved by: _____

The following equipment should be in the POTA Tote bin:

- Battery box
- Battery charger (in battery box)
- Laptop with power supply
- Inverter
- PAC-12 vertical antenna
- End-fed antenna
- 50' RG8X patch cable
- Rubber mallet

The following gear should be gathered from other locations in the shack:

- Icom IC-706 with mic and power cable
- MFJ Antenna Analyzer and power supply

If planning on using the End-fed antenna you will need

- A launcher (spud gun, slingshot, etc.)
- Sufficient rope to raise the antenna
- A ground stake to mount the balun

We suggest charging the battery and computer the night before your activation. PLEASE charge it after your activation