GET GOING GUIDE

# HFConverse **PACTOR**

Keyboard-to-keyboard contacts over an error-free link

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PACTOR is a connected mode. You make a link to one station, the modem takes turns for you, and every character arrives error-free. The other station can run any PACTOR program, not just HFConverse.

> **Golden rule:** if you're ever unsure whether you're still transmitting, press the red **Stop TX (DD)** button.

## Before you start

Get these right once and every mode just works.

1. **Your callsign is set.** Settings ▸ Station. Without it, Send CQ stays greyed out.
2. **HFC is connected to the modem.** The Terminal shows the modem's `cmd:` prompt. The Mode menu only works while you're connected.
3. **Radio control works, if you have it.** Type a frequency and press **Set Frequency**: the radio should move. No CAT? Set the frequency on the radio by hand.
4. **The radio is in USB or USB-Data** (DIGU), with the audio level that already works for your modem.
5. **Open the screen from the Mode menu: Mode ▸ PACTOR**.

For PACTOR also check:

- **Tones:** both stations should use modem **TOnes 4**, the default (Settings ▸ Terminal & Modes ▸ Pactor). A station on a different tone pair can see your CQ on the waterfall but copy nothing.

## The screen

From top to bottom:

| Part | What it is |
|---|---|
| **Received** | The other station's text. |
| **Your text** | What you've sent. Text still waiting to go out shows greyed at the foot. |
| **Working line** | Their callsign (**Working**), **Name**, **Long path**, **Robust**, **Max** and **Connect**. |
| **Compose** | Where you type. The cursor is already there when the screen opens. |
| **Radio box** | Frequency, **Set Frequency**, **Read From Radio** and your **Favorites**. |
| **Beside Compose** | **Clear Queue**, **Send Image…**, **Log QSO…**, **Capture** and **Close**. |
| **Action row** | **Send CQ**, **Auto CQ**, **Stop TX (DD)**, **Unproto**, **Duplex**, **Live**, **Over**, **Changeover**, **End QSO (QRT)**. |
| **Status strip** | The modem state, the **Listen** button, and whose turn it is: **Receiving** or **Transmitting (our over)**. |

Their text and yours are always in different colours: green and yellow in the Classic scheme. To change them, use Settings ▸ Appearance & Startup ▸ Text colours.

## Meeting frequencies

HFC comes with four meeting frequencies in your PACTOR favorites, so HFC users can find each other. Call CQ or listen there.

| Favorite | Centre (CF) | Dial (USB) | Max level |
|---|---|---|---|
| HFC meet 20m | 14109.0 kHz | 14107.5 kHz | Your Settings level |
| HFC meet 30m | 10146.5 kHz | 10145.0 kHz | PACTOR-2 |
| HFC meet 40m | 7046.5 kHz | 7045.0 kHz | PACTOR-2 |
| HFC meet 80m | 3589.5 kHz | 3588.0 kHz | PACTOR-2 |

Picking one sets the frequency and the right PACTOR level for you. Outside Europe and the Americas, listen first on 40 m: 7046.5 kHz is in a part of the band also used for phone.

## A first test: NAVTEX

Before your first QSO, check that your radio, modem and HFC work together by receiving NAVTEX, the maritime weather service. It's on air around the clock and needs no other station.

1. Set the dial to **516.5 kHz, USB-Data** (NAVTEX itself is on 518 kHz).
2. Open the PACTOR screen. Messages start with `ZCZC` and end with `NNNN` and appear in **Received**.
3. Nothing? Reception is usually best at night. Check the dial is 1.5 kHz below 518 kHz.

## Making a call

1. Set the frequency: pick a favorite, type one and press **Set Frequency**, or double-click a spot in **On the Air**.
2. Put their callsign in **Working**. Select it in Received, right-click, **Add selection to working callsign**, or type it.
3. Leave **Long path** and **Robust** unticked unless the signal is long-path or very weak.
4. Press **Connect**. The status line says *Calling…*.
5. No answer? Press **Stop TX (DD)** to stop calling at once.
6. When `*** CONNECTED TO G4QRS` appears, the link is up. As the caller you usually have it first: type your greeting and press **Ctrl+Enter**.

## Calling CQ

1. Set the frequency. Announcing yourself in **On the Air** helps others find you.
2. Press **Send CQ** for one CQ line, or **Auto CQ** for several lines followed by your CQ end text.
3. Wait. When someone connects, nothing needs clicking: **Working** fills in and their text appears in Received.

## Taking a call

- With the PACTOR screen open, **Listen** is on and the modem **answers by itself**. You'll see `*** CONNECTED TO G4QRS`, and **Working** fills in.
- Read their over, then reply.
- On a P4 Dragon or DR-9400, Listen isn't used, but the modem still answers calls to your callsign.

## The conversation

| Key (in Compose) | What it does |
|---|---|
| **Enter** | Puts the line in your queue. It shows greyed in your pane; nothing is on air yet. |
| **Shift+Enter** | A new line inside your over. |
| **Ctrl+Enter** | **Over**: sends your queue plus `btu G4QRS de GW0XYZ>`, and hands the link to them. |
| **Ctrl+Y** | **Changeover**: hand over with nothing to send, or **break in** while they're sending. Press it once and wait. |
| **F1–F12** | Your macros. |

- **Not sure whose turn it is?** Look at the status strip. **Transmitting (our over)** means it's your turn: press Ctrl+Enter. **Receiving** means wait.
- **Duplex** (both stations must switch it on) changes over automatically.
- **Live** sends each key as you type it.
- **Capture** (beside Compose) writes the QSO to a text file as it happens, both sides, until you press it again. Log ▸ Open captures folder… finds the files.

## Ending and logging

1. Press **End QSO (QRT)** and confirm. Your queue and `73 G4QRS de GW0XYZ sk` go out, then the link closes.
2. If the link stalls, press **End QSO** again and choose **Stop now (DD)**.
3. The **Worked Station** window opens, filled in. Check it and press **Log QSO**.

## Quick reference

| I want to… | Do this |
|---|---|
| Call a station | Working + **Connect** |
| Call CQ | **Send CQ** or **Auto CQ** |
| Be called | Keep the screen open; the modem answers |
| Send my over | **Ctrl+Enter** |
| Break in | **Ctrl+Y** |
| Stop at once | **Stop TX (DD)** |
| Finish | **End QSO (QRT)** |
| Log it | The log window opens by itself |
| Keep a copy of the QSO | **Capture** (files in Log ▸ Open captures folder…) |

## When things go wrong

| What you see | Try this |
|---|---|
| Mode menu greyed out | Connect to the modem first. |
| Send CQ greyed out | Set your callsign in Settings ▸ Station. Hover over the button to see why. |
| A call never connects | Check the frequency and their callsign. Try **Robust** for a weak signal. Stop with **Stop TX (DD)**. |
| The link seems stuck | *Transmitting (our over)*: press Ctrl+Enter. *Receiving*: wait, or press Ctrl+Y once. |
| They see your CQ but can't copy it | Check both stations are on TOnes 4. |
| The radio doesn't move | Check radio control in Settings ▸ Equipment, or set the frequency by hand. |
| The modem won't leave a mode | Type `PT` in the **cmd:** box. |

## Issue history

| Issue | Date | Changes |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | October 2026 | Meeting frequencies. A first test: receiving NAVTEX on 518 kHz. |
| 3 | October 2026 | Clear Queue, Send Image…, Log QSO…, Capture and Close moved beside Compose. |
| 2 | October 2026 | Capture: save a QSO to a file. |
| 1 | October 2026 | First issue. |

More detail on every screen and setting is in the HFConverse User Manual. mw0gbq.hamserve.uk · HFConverse is not affiliated with SCS.