GET GOING GUIDE

HFConverse **PSK31**

A narrow keyboard mode: close tuning, little to set up

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PSK31 works like RTTY: no link, you transmit, then you listen. The signal is only about 60 Hz wide, so it digs out of the noise well but needs tuning to within a few hertz. There's no baud, shift or polarity to set.

> **Golden rule:** if you're ever unsure whether you're still transmitting, press the red **Receive / STOP** 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 ▸ PSK31**.

For PSK31 also check:

- **Don't over-drive the radio.** PSK31's transmit level comes from the **FSK** output level (Settings ▸ Equipment ▸ Modem), not the PSK one. An over-driven PSK31 signal becomes very wide and spoils the band for everyone.

The screen

The main parts:

Part	What it is
Received	Decoded text from the band.
Working line	**Working**, **Name** and **QSO Start**.
Compose	Where you type ahead while receiving.
Radio	Frequency, **Set Frequency**, the **Step** buttons, **Carrier −1 Hz / +1 Hz** and **Favorites**.
Buttons	**Start PSK31 / Stop PSK31**, **Send CQ**, **Transmit**, **Receive / STOP**, **Clear Send Buffer**.

Setting up

1. Set the frequency. **14070 kHz** is the usual spot on 20 m.
2. Press **Start PSK31**. The button turns blue.
3. Use the **Step** buttons (±10 Hz, ±100 Hz, ±1 kHz) to move the radio onto a signal.
4. Use **Carrier −1 Hz / +1 Hz** for the fine tuning until text prints. Carrier moves the modem's decoder, not the radio, and only works while receiving.

Calling CQ

1. Press **Send CQ**.
2. Watch **Received** for a reply. Nothing pops up or connects: you just see their text.

Answering a CQ

1. Select their callsign in their text, right-click, **Add selection to working callsign**.
2. Press **QSO Start** to mark the contact for the log.
3. Wait until they've stopped sending.
4. Type your reply (or press an F-key macro) and press **Ctrl+Enter** or **Transmit**.

The conversation

- Type ahead while they send; **Ctrl+Enter** transmits it.
- End each over with `G4QRS de GW0XYZ k`.
- **Receive / STOP** stops transmitting at once.
- Changed your mind about text already queued? **Clear Send Buffer** is the only way to take it back: it's held on the modem, not in HFC. (**Clear Receive** only tidies your screen.)

Ending and logging

1. Send your 73.
2. Press **QSO Stop**. The **Worked Station** window opens with the callsign, mode, frequency and both times. Press **Log QSO**.
3. Press **Stop PSK31**. HFC stops any transmission and returns the modem to its `cmd:` prompt.

Quick reference

I want to…	Do this
Start listening	**Start PSK31**
Find a signal	**Step** buttons
Pull it into decode	**Carrier −1 / +1 Hz**
Call CQ	**Send CQ**
Answer someone	Type your reply, then **Ctrl+Enter** or **Transmit**
Take back queued text	**Clear Send Buffer**
Stop at once	**Receive / STOP**
Log it	**QSO Start** at the beginning, **QSO Stop** at the end
Finish	**Stop PSK31**

When things go wrong

What you see	Try this
Nothing prints at all	Did you press **Start PSK31**? Is the radio in USB or USB-Data? Tune with **Step**, then **Carrier ±1 Hz**.
Text prints in bursts or with errors	Fine-tune with **Carrier ±1 Hz**.
Others report a wide or splattery signal	Turn down the **FSK** output level in Settings, or the radio's audio input.
Send CQ greyed out	Set your callsign in Settings ▸ Station. Hover over the button to see why.
Not sure if you're transmitting	Press **Receive / STOP**.
The modem won't leave PSK31	Type `PT` in the **cmd:** box.

Issue history

Issue	Date	Changes
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.