



# International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 2014 General Conference – Varna-Albena, Bulgaria

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>Conflicting CW Procedure</b>		
<b>Society</b>	IRA	<b>Country:</b>	Iceland
<b>Committee:</b>	C3	<b>Paper number:</b>	VA14_C3_40
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## Conflicting CW Procedure

### Introduction

The CW procedure described in the booklet “Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur” is in significant disagreement with long standing CW practice, in some cases going against the international radio regulations on issues that were in harmony before. Many see this new version as an IARU approved procedure, contrary to the union’s intention. A correction and clarification is proposed by IRA.

### Background

1) The booklet “Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur” by ON4UN and ON4WW was a timely effort well received. It was endorsed by the IARU Administrative Council in Konstanz, June 2008 (Resolution 08-1), brought up by Region 1. Recommendation by Region 1 in Cavtat, November 2008 (CT08\_C3\_Rec\_44), reads “. . . should be published on member society websites, and publicity should be given, via member societies, to these publications”. This has happened by translation into 28 languages and massive publication on society websites, as well as some printed editions.

2) IRA found that the CW-procedure described in the booklet causes disagreement with long standing CW practice and resolved in April 2013 that it could not be placed on its list of study material as is. Candid negotiations with the authors revealed kind understanding of IRA’s concern but did not result in plans for satisfactory corrections. IRA wrote to IARU on March 3rd 2014, essentially asking if it was the intention of the union to make changes to existing CW procedure as a result of Resolution 08-1. The prompt reply to that question was “No”.

### Key Points

3) It has been established that IARU saw the endorsement as one of several means to improve the on-the-air behavior of radio amateurs and reduce malicious interference experienced. Many, however, believe that the booklet is an IARU publication and that the specifics of operating procedure are those of IARU.

4) The discrepancy in procedure of greatest concern is the change in meaning of K from “invitation to transmit” to “over to you”, essentially becoming KN. Consequently the use of K is banned in the booklet as an ending of a CQ call. That is contrary to the international radio regulations. AR is prescribed as the new replacement for K

following a CQ. AR is an ending that contains no invitation and is traditionally used to indicate that callers are not expected or wanted.

5) That critical change in procedural signs and their use has not received much attention so far, may be attributed to the fact that experienced operators just go about their business as usual and are not familiar with the booklet. Newcomers, on the other hand, see it as a vital source of information. This may split ham generations that must go hand in hand in order to preserve CW as a communications mode.

6) It may be noted that Region 1 carried a recommendation by DARC in Sun City, August 2011 (SC11\_C3\_32), towards “. . . tasking IARU to ask UNESCO for establishing Morse code as an Intangible Heritage” with reference to it being an “... artificial language with all its abbreviations”. That listing by UNESCO may take place soon, laying certain responsibility on the shoulders of the keepers to safeguard the heritage.

## **Proposal**

In order to avoid confusion and possible risk to CW as a living language, IRA asks the IARU Region 1 conference to agree that the following items of CW-procedure should be observed.

## **Recommendation**

1. That IARU Region 1 recommends the continued use of well-established CW operating procedure that involves the following:

- a) K is invitation to transmit
- b) Station ending in AR alone is not inviting callers
- c) K is the correct ending of a general CQ call
- d) Putting AR or PSE ahead of K is elective
- e) CL is an abbreviation, sent as two separate letters
- f) KN is sent as one symbol
- g) AR is commonly used as separator between the message part of a transmission and formalities at the end

2. That maximum publicity should be given, via member societies and other available channels, to this recommendation.

3. If this recommendation is carried, the Region 1 EC is instructed to bring this result to the IARU AC at the first possible opportunity.

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*Explanatory Notes by the IRA Examination Committee that accompany their resolution of April 29th 2013, are attached to this paper as an Appendix.*

*For reference to radio amateurs and the Morse code in the international regulations see: ITU-R M.1677-1 (10/2009)*

*Further material and 2 research papers are available from the committee via: <http://bit.ly/MGrcRj>*

Appendix to IRA paper at Varna-Albena, Sept. 2014

**Explanatory Notes by the IRA Examination Committee  
To Accompany Resolution of April 29th, 2013  
Supersedes draft of April 2013**

*Note: This version is stripped of references for brevity. For the full version see:  
<http://bit.ly/MGrcRj>*

**Worthy Intentions of IARU**

The IRA Examination Committee applauds and supports the very timely initiative taken by the IARU, initiated by Region 1, towards good operating ethics and practice in amateur radio as embodied in the following resolutions:

**RESOLUTION 08-1**  
*concerning operating standards*

The IARU Administrative Council, Konstanz, June 2008,

noting that the Amateur Radio Services are services which rely on self-regulation for effective use of their spectrum allocation, and

noting that poor operating behaviour adversely affects the enjoyment of all radio amateurs and does not enhance the reputation of the Amateur Radio Services,

resolves

that all radio amateurs be encouraged to operate to the highest levels of proficiency, with proper consideration for others using the amateur radio bands;

that the necessary effort be made by member-societies to teach newcomers and others correct operating behaviour;

and therefore

endorses and recommends the principles set out in the booklet "Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur" by John Devoldere, ON4UN and Marc Demeuleneere, ON4WW, and

encourages each IARU Region to consider this booklet, with a view to adopting it, including any Regional variations that might be felt appropriate.

And by Region 1:

***It is recommended that –***

- a) That Region 1 endorse IARU Resolution 08-01
- b) That the ON4UN/ON4WW booklet on ethics & operating practice should be pub-

lished on member society websites, and published in paper form in local languages wherever possible, and that maximum publicity should be given, via member societies, to these publications. (Cavtat 2008 -CT08\_C3\_Rec\_44)

The minutes of the Konstanz meeting indicate "perceived degradation in operating standards by a small but noisy minority" as an impetus for the resolution, a concern fully endorsed by the IRA Examination Committee.

### **Leads to Confusing CW Procedure**

What seems to have gone unnoticed, however, is the fact that the chapter on CW procedure in the book "Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur" (EOPRA for short) departs in significant ways from established practice and teaching up that point. As a result IARU is effectively pushing for a *radical change* in CW procedure, at times when handing down the Morse tradition to newcomers depends mainly on the individual effort of old timers.

The IRA Examination Committee believes this was not the intent of IARU.

### **K and AR**

By far the most used procedure sign in CW is the letter **K**, defined in the international regulations (*ITU-R M 1172*) as "invitation to transmit". It is used both at change-over during a QSO and after a CQ, inviting anyone in the latter case. *Its use following a CQ call is specifically prescribed in the international regulations (ITU-R M 1170)*. All teaching and practice by radio amateurs worldwide has always been along these lines, with the addition of the sign **KN** (sent as one symbol, not the separate letters K and N). It means that a specific station only, or a defined group of stations, is invited to transmit. It is used to replace **K** if need arises, most often when unwanted callers butt in on an ongoing QSO. Accordingly, many see **K** primarily as an invitation to all stations.

EOPRA changes the meaning of **K** into "over to you," referring strictly to the other partner of a QSO. This makes **K** essentially a version of **KN** and consequently EOPRA states that **K** should never be used to end a CQ call. *This is totally unprecedented.*

The sign **AR** is defined as "end of transmission" in both the international regulations and the radio amateur literature, including EOPRA. It contains no invitation and is suitable for ending any transmission to which reply is not expected or sought, such as test transmission. Radio amateurs have a long history of ending a call to another station in **AR** alone until contact has been established, deliberately leaving out any invitation to discourage calls from a 3rd station during the process. The ARRL DX Code widely published for decades, actually puts a ban on calling a DX station signing **AR**.

EOPRA chooses **AR** to replace **K** at the end of a CQ call.

If the new teaching of how to sign a CQ call catches on, newcomers will associate **AR** with "call me" and **K** with "keep off", *exactly the reverse of the lifelong tradition*

that has become an innate habit of seasoned operators. This will cause confusion lasting for decades.

### Current CW Procedure

An on-air survey was performed during April - Sept. 2012 to put a figure on the actual practice 4 years after the announcement of Resolution 08-1 by IARU. A total of 318 unique callers of CQ from 63 DXCC entities were logged at random, grouped according to their ending. The result is shown in table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Endings after CQ*

<b>K</b>	49 %
<b>PSE K</b>	25 %
<b><u>AR</u> K</b>	19 %
<b><u>AR</u></b>	3 %
<b>BK</b>	1%
(No ending)	3 %

Only 3 % had adopted the new procedure 4 years after its endorsement. Practically everyone else uses a final **K** for ending, either as is or preceded by **AR** or **PSE**.

### **AR K and PSE K**

Amateurs have put **AR** after a CQ call for a very long time, adding **K** for the invitation so clearly needed. That is logical considering the different meaning of **AR** and **K**. This combined ending of a CQ call was in fact quite commonly taught, and table 1 shows that 19 % are still using it in 2012. The international regulations make significant use of the combination **AR K**, although not after CQ.

EOPRA says that the combination **AR K** is “not a proper procedure”.

**PSE** is an abbreviation for please. Putting it ahead of **K** is an old practice, possibly regional in the beginning. Now it is used widely, by 25 % according to table 1.

EOPRA advises against the use of **PSE K**.

Putting **AR** or **PSE** ahead of **K** is not necessary, but objecting to this common (44 % all together) practice is a matter of personal taste.

### **CL and KN**

**CL** is an abbreviation listed in the international regulations as meaning “I am closing my station”. It is the last sign transmitted at close down. Radio amateurs have adopted and used it exactly like this; transmitted as separate letters according to custom in case of abbreviations.

EOPRA says that **CL** shall be sent as one symbol, **CL**.

**KN** is not listed in the international regulations, but has had its firm place with radio amateurs for roughly a lifetime. All printed literature by various IARU member societies known to us, including that of ARRL and RSGB, has consistently had it sent as one symbol.

EOPRA says that **KN** shall be sent as separate letters, **KN**.

### Hidden Changes

Nothing in the text of EOPRA indicates that changes in meaning and procedure are

being introduced. It ascribes “improper” use of the signs in question to the fact “that many operators do not really know what each of these prosigns exactly mean”. This, along with IARU’s resolutions, gives the impression that EOPRA is the final word on correct procedure, even if it results in breach with the international radio regulations on some issues where there was harmony before.