

Rules and Program Information

Island Criteria

All freshwater and/or saltwater islands within the fifty (50) states of the United States including the District of Columbia (DC) and those listed under Territories and Protectorates in the island directory, qualify for USI if the following conditions are met:

1. The island is totally surrounded by water and is a minimum of 100 feet long in any direction (including height) and a minimum of 50 feet from the main shoreline at DXpedition time. These distances are approximate and shall be at the discretion of the operator. Bridges and narrow causeways linking the island to the mainland or other islands are acceptable. Please ensure that the island is not a peninsula. USI encourages island hopping, activating multiple islands in a day or weekend.
2. Operation from boats, ships, etc. is allowed as long as some part of the radio station (transceiver, antenna, feed-line or power supply) is physically located on the island.
3. The name of the body of water, lake, river or sea, must be listed on a map. The island must be present on a map, including aerial images like Google maps. The island name should appear on a map of some type, preferably in the USGS Geographic Name (GNIS) database, or as a minimum be known locally. First-time qualifiers must coordinate the "official" USI name with the QM. Please supply the QM with accurate Latitude / Longitude coordinates or an accurate street address so the island can be linked to Google Map.
4. Although USI was officially launched in September 1994, prior contacts with US islands count for awards. All state, territory or protectorate islands that meet 1 through 3 above must be qualified and receive a USI number.
5. An island that resides in two states will be given two numbers, for example: Turtle MI062L Lake Erie, Turtle OH038L Lake Erie

General Information

The Qualification Manager (QM) will assign numbers for all islands according to state and type. Example: TX010 where TX are the state abbreviations for Texas, and the number is a consecutive qualification number issued. The suffix L, R; or S designate the type of island (lake, river or coastal shore) and are added after qualification. When ordering QSL cards, please remember to have the USI number, island name and QTH (state, territory or protectorate) printed on them along with the other verification info for award purposes. You may also QSL via Email, Logbook of The World (LoTW) and eQSL.cc. You are encouraged to use the USI logo on your QSLs.

For an initial island qualification all of the HF amateur modes and bands, including WARC, 6 meters and Satellite contacts can be used. **No cross-band, cross-mode, or QSOs made above the 6 meter band are permitted for USI Qualification credit.** The unofficial USI operating frequencies are 7.250, 21.350, 14.250-14.260 (main) and 28.450 MHz phone plus your favorite CW or digital frequency. The frequencies should be easy to remember as they all end in 50 and there are 50 states! Those frequencies should be used for USI DXpeditions and to pass USI info. The frequency range of 14250 to 14260 kHz has become known as the ISLAND CORRIDOR. Note: 14.260 should be reserved for, and given way to IOTA (Islands On The Air) operations.

- If you are planning an island expedition, and your island is not listed on the [Island Directory](#) send a request to the QM requesting that the island be added to the Directory by completing the [Add an Island to the Directory](#) form. The QM will reply with either a newly assigned number if the island meets the USI requirements, or with any questions that they may have. NOTE: Please do the above with enough lead time for us to do the necessary research.
- Once you have your island number and you've made your plans, contact the WebMaster to request that your information is included on the [USI Calendar](#). The [Request to add an Operation to the USI Calendar](#) form can be used to do this. You may also want to consider joining the [U.S. Island Email Group](#) and the [USI FaceBook page](#)

Once you have Qualified a new USI, the following information must be sent to the Qualifications Manager. It can be sent, preferably by using the [Report an Island Qualification](#) form, or by emailing it to the [Qualification Manager](#).

1. A statement that you did Qualify the island.
2. A count of the QSOs made.
3. The date of the operation.
4. The name of the island.
5. The USI island number.
6. The call used. Only one call for a Qualification, like a 1×1, club call, personal call.
7. A list of the ops.

Qualification

Qualification is the initial, first-time operation from a US island authorized and numbered by the QM.

- In advance of the qualifying operations, the QM will assign the island a USI number if required.
- If the island is already on the USI Island Directory, just notify the QM and webmaster of your pending expedition.
- An island is only qualified once.
- The QM will retain your call sign as the person who qualified the island.
- Islands can be qualified by an individual or a team.
- The USI requires one “Team” call sign be used for all qualifying operations. Such as a 1×1, club call, or the call of one of the operators. (All operators will receive credit for qualifying a new island).
- In order to qualify a new U.S. island, a minimum of 15 contacts are required. (January 1, 2019 the 2 DXCC QSO rule was dropped)
- Until you reach the magic 15 QSOs during your qualification operations and prior to the Qualification, we ask that you only use the USI Number without the suffix. Such as “VA001 or TN001” and the island name. Once qualified (15 QSOs) the suffix (L = Lake, S = Shore, and R = River) can be added to the USI Number. Such as “VA001S or TN001R”
- Also, before the island is qualified, it is recommended that the information that the island hasn’t been qualified yet be given out during the QSO. I.e., “This island is not yet qualified.”
- You are encouraged to make more than just the minimum contacts.
- If band conditions are poor, and the 15 QSO mark is not reached, the same operator(s) may return to an island on another date to finish getting the required 15 QSOs needed for qualification. This must be coordinated and verified with the USI QM. Once you have qualified a new USI, notify the QM with your summary statement by using the form here.
- So, “what do I need to do to qualify an island”, you say? Study the Island Directory or your local charts or maps. Spend time online with Google Earth or maps. Contact and work with the QM in advance for verification and acceptance and then go out and do it!!!

Activation

Activation is any subsequent operations from a US island once it has been qualified.

- You are NOT required to contact the QM to activate an island.
- There is no minimum number of QSOs required for activation.
- An island expedition can include qualifying one island (with QM approval) and activating another island. No summary statement is required for activations.
- Once you've made your plans, contact the Web Master to request that your information is included on the [USI Calendar](#). The [Request to add an Operation to the USI Calendar](#) form can be used to do this.
- When activating an island that has two different state numbers, you will use the number from the state you're in. Or, if you are sitting on the state line, or the island is completely claimed by two states, you can give out the two numbers.
- Note: We have never tracked Activations. So, there is no reporting involved. But, do it for the fun of it and to give those that have never worked that island a chance to work it.

Miscellaneous

Check out the [Awards page](#) for a complete listing of all the USI awards.

Don't forget to visit the [USI Blog](#) to see photos and stories of past USI adventures, and contribute some photos of your own to add to the collection.

Conclusion

USI, including the COM and all members, assumes no liability or responsibility in administering this program nor do they make any guarantees of any kind. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome – improvement ideas are especially appreciated. USI will be changing as we grow in hopes of making island collecting even more exciting!

We are not affiliated in any way with the Islands On The Air (IOTA) awards program offered by Islands on the Air (IOTA) Ltd.

Thanks, 73 and have fun CHASING ISLANDS!