

WORLD STANDARD TIME ZONES

As Hams, we usually log our contacts using a common time so that there is no confusion between stations as to the actual time of the contact. With this in mind, what time should we use in our logs, the local time in New Mexico, or the time at the distant station?

To avoid confusion, most radio logs normally use UTC time. (UTC=Universal Time Coordinated) There are twenty-five time zones in the world, and the local time in some of these zones does not remain constant due to changing to Daylight Saving Time during a portion of the year. However, UTC does not change, making it an excellent choice for a time standard. If everyone uses UTC for the time of contact there is no confusion between stations, especially if logs are uploaded to QRZ.com, eQsl or LotW.

UTC is also known as Zulu time - Zulu being the phonetic spelling for the letter Z. So, the question is: why use the letter Z for UTC? The answer is simple. There are 25 time zones in the world and each has been labeled with a letter of the English alphabet, beginning with A and ending with Z and leaving out the letter J. UTC, which years ago was known as GMT for Greenwich Mean Time, is in the zero meridian which runs through Greenwich, England. Going east, the first time zone is A, the next is B, and so on through time zone M, which borders the International Date Line. (Don't forget, the letter J is left out.) Then once again, beginning at the zero meridian and going west, the time zones are designated N through Y, at which time we again reach the International Date Line. The zero meridian time zone is labeled Z.

Thus, we see logs with the time listed as hh:mm UTC, or in some cases hh:mm Z. Both are correct and mean the same.

Note: Sometimes, in local nets or other operations, operators will denote the time with an L, meaning local time. This should not be confused with time zone L. To be correct, New Mexico is time zone T, but due to Daylight Saving time use of the letter T could be confusing, thus L works whether on MST or MDT.

Follow this link to see the World Time Zone Map:

http://aa.usno.navy.mil/faq/docs/world_tzones.php