

# SKCC Straight Key Month - 2026 User Guide



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## **Introduction**

The Straight Key Month special event (aka SKM) celebrates manual Morse radiotelegraphy using straight keys, bugs and cootie keys. It runs from Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> through 31<sup>st</sup>. This guide is offered as an aid in finding and contacting the SKM special event stations. Hopefully, readers will be inspired to hunt for them in all call regions and to contact as many of our operators as possible.

This guide is intended for new CW operators as well as those who are new to SKM. There are a number of practical tips included that are useful for HF CW operation in general. New users can improve their CW skills by hunting for SKM event stations around the bands.

SKM stations in the US will operate with the K3Y special event call sign; participating members in other countries will use their own individual call signs. All are listed on the event calendar & schedules (below).

The calendar and other helpful resources mentioned in this guide can be found on the SKCC Straight Key Month web page located at [www.skccgroup.com/k3y/](http://www.skccgroup.com/k3y/)

## **SKM Stations**

Event stations in the US will be operating as K3Y/1, K3Y/2, etc., according to their geographic location. In addition to these ten mainland call regions there will also be operators in Hawaii (K3Y/KH6), Alaska (K3Y/KL7) and Puerto Rico (K3Y/KP4). In any given US call region only one operator will be on the air at a time. Each call region has Coordinators who are responsible for scheduling operators and processing logs. Their email contact addresses are listed on the webpage.

SKCC members outside of US jurisdiction will operate as event stations using their own call signs (not K3Y). They typically call "CQ SKM", to indicate their special status as SKM event operators. Multiple stations in the same country may be on the air at the same time. They are listed on the event schedule but may often operate at other than scheduled times. So, you will need to keep watch for them.

Event operators are free to choose their own frequencies on bands 160m through 6m. The only exception is 60 Meters where SKM operation is not permitted. Operators are typically found near the published SKCC "watering hole" frequencies but may go anywhere in the CW portion of the band: 1813.5; 3550; 7038; 7055; 7114; 10120; 14050; 14114; 18080; 21050; 21114; 24910; 28050; 28114; 50090 kHz.

## **Finding the SKM Stations**

Listed below are online resources for locating SKM activity. While these tools are very convenient don't forget about the "old fashioned" way of finding stations-- spinning the VFO across the band and listening for them.

Manually scanning the bands has several benefits. You will occasionally find stations on the air before they are spotted online. You can be the first, or among the few, to make contact before a crowd of callers gather. Discovering stations on your own is more satisfying than being pointed to them online. Monitoring for



## SKCC SkedPage

<https://sked.skccgroup.com/>

Operators will often (but not always) log in to the SkedPage and post their activity. Some may accept QSY requests for particular bands but they are not required to do so. If they are busy with a steady stream of callers they may be reluctant to switch to another band. Operators may be busy working callers so please don't feel offended if your request is not responded to or if an operator has turned off their PM messaging.

## SKCC Skimmer Software

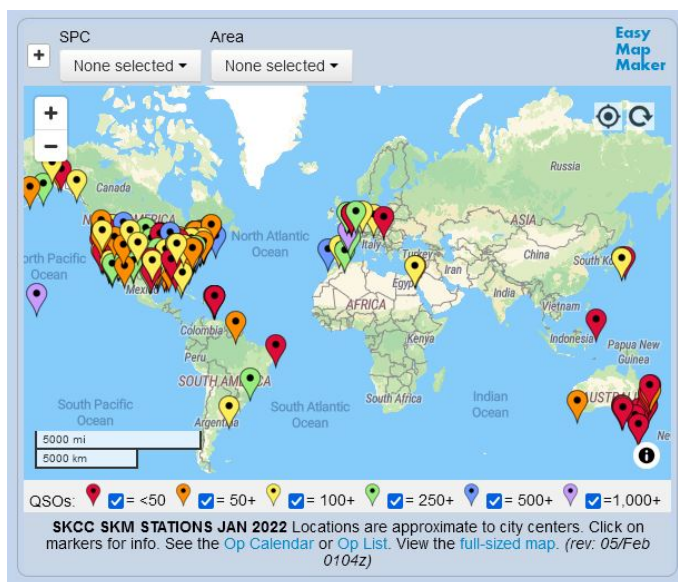
Available on the [K7MJG website](#). Enter callsigns of stations that you are hunting, either K3Y regional calls like "K3Y/7", "K3Y/KH6", etc. or operator callsigns such as "F6HKA", etc. Skimmer is a comprehensive application that sources data from RBN and SkedPage. Refer to the "K3Y Goal" section in the Skimmer instructions.

## RBN Reverse Beacon Network

To see an SKM Operator's current or past activity on the bands enter their callsign (example: K3Y/2 for US area-2 operators; or the personal callsign for non-US op's). Past activity may give a hint as to future operations, indicating favorite frequencies or days/times. Examples: [all K3Y/KL7 operators \(if any\) during last 24 hours](#) or [all K3Y call signs during the past hour](#) etc.

## Operator Map

The interactive world map of SKM Operator locations is at [skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y](https://skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y). You can pan and zoom the map; click on the markers to see op info; filter stations by SPC (location), Area, and number of QSOs logged.



## Contacting the SKM Stations

It is often quite easy to make contact with SKM operators. But sometimes more effort is required, depending on propagation conditions and the number of other



callers responding. By following the tips below you will make things easier for yourself, the SKM operator, and other callers.

Answer the event station's CQ by simply transmitting your callsign *once or twice*. A longer response such as "K3Y/KH6 K3Y/KH6 DE AF2Z AF2Z K" will interfere with other callers and decrease the number of contacts the operator can get to during his shift. There is usually no need for you to transmit the SKM station's call sign: he knows you are calling him when you simply send your call sign in response to his CQ.

If there are several other stations calling try moving your transmitter a little off-frequency (i.e., not "zero beat"), up to 150 Hz higher or lower than the SKM op. This makes it easier for him to distinguish your pitch among multiple callers and will increase your chance of getting through.

If you do achieve contact with an operator who is getting lots of calls please keep your exchanges short. Other callers who are still waiting for their chance to get through will appreciate it. There is no need to rush but don't send unnecessary info or repetitious ID'ing. On the other hand, if an operator is "lonely" (i.e., not getting any responses to repeated CQ's), you can feel free to be more chatty.

There is no penalty for or prohibition against "dup" contacts (i.e., contacting the same operator multiple times on the same band) but in general this should be avoided. However, you can certainly call an operator again for "insurance" if you are not certain a previous contact has been logged.

## The QSO Exchange

When you make contact with SKM stations they will typically respond with the following information: RST; QTH; NAME; CALL; SKCC# (where CALL is the operator's own licensed callsign).

In response, you should send your info: RST; QTH; NAME, and SKCC#. If you are not an SKCC member just send RST, QTH and name. Non-members are always welcomed!

Common CW greetings and abbreviations are often included: GM, GE, FB, GL, TKS, 73, CUL, etc. The following is an example of a typical exchange with a US SKM operator (caller responses are highlighted in red):

```
CQ CQ DE K3Y/5 K
AF2Z
AF2Z DE K3Y/5 GM UR 579 LA DANA AD5VC SKCC NR 1555S K
R GM DANA RST 599 NJ DREW SKCC 2082S DE AF2Z K
R TKS DREW GL 73 SK
TU 73
CQ DE K3Y/5 ...
```

Notice that the K3Y/5 station has included his own callsign "AD5VC" in his initial info exchange. This would be omitted for SKM operators outside of the US since they're already operating under their own call sign rather than a K3Y/x call.

If you need the operator to repeat something you can simply send that item followed by a question mark, for example: "RST?" or "NAME?", "NR?", etc. If you

want to have the entire exchange repeated just send "PLS AGN? K" Don't hesitate to send "QRS" if you want the operator to go slower.

Likewise, the operator may ask you to repeat an item. Occasionally he may not copy your call sign fully and will send "QRZ?" or part of your callsign followed by a question mark; just resend the requested item once or twice followed by a "K".

## Logs & Contacts

Callers don't submit logs or entry forms since SKM is not a contest. Only SKM event operators submit logs. It is generally suggested that you log SKM operators under their own callsigns; then, for reference, include their K3Y callsign ("K3Y/1" etc) in the comments field.

If you apply for SKCC awards and endorsements you will need to submit operators' personal callsigns, not K3Y/x calls. Most K3Y operators include their own call sign during the exchange; if not, you can ask for it by sending "PLS UR CALL?".

Some K3Y operators upload their contacts to LOTW. These will be under their own callsign, not the K3Y call. (Whether an operator uploads to LOTW is their individual preference. Not all SKM operators upload to LOTW.)

SKM operators submit all contacts to the event database (master log) which is used for compiling the caller Sweeps, Stats and Standings (see below), and for printing the event QSL cards.

You can check your contacts by entering your callsign in the SKM Log Search here: <https://www.skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-logsearch.php>

K3Y/KL7	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
K3Y/KP4	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	-	-
K3Y-AF			-	-	X	Operators worked: G4PVM, CT7AUP F6EJN, F6HKA, PG4I				
K3Y-AS		-	-	-	X					
K3Y-EU	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
K3Y-NA	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
K3Y-OC	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-
K3Y-SA		-	X		-	-	X	-	-	-

AF2Z has worked K3Y on 47 out of a possible 174 band slots.

The "X" marks show band-area combinations where you have been logged. Mousing over an "X" mark displays the call sign(s) of the operator(s) who have logged you. Dash marks indicate bands where at least one contact has been logged by operators in the region.

It shouldn't take more than a day or two before your contact appears in the online database. For questions about missing contacts you can email the Coordinator for the particular operator's region; or the Event Manager. We will try to hunt down missing contacts and fix busted calls.

## **Sweeps, Stats & Standings**

You can participate in SKM and get a QSL card by making only a single contact. However, there is much more fun to be had by working various groups of additional stations. For example: a basic “sweep” consists of at least one contact in each of the ten US mainland call regions, K3Y/1 through K3Y/0. A DX Sweep is six contacts, one in each WAC continental region: Africa, Asia, Europe, N. America, Oceania, S. America.

Following are various Sweeps & Stats categories that you can pursue. These are all tabulated automatically and displayed in the Participant Standings section of the SKM webpages at [skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-statistics.php](http://skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-statistics.php) You can track your own progress on these pages by simply doing a browser search (Ctrl+F) for your call sign and seeing which categories your call is reported in.

There are several “sweeps” categories, shown below. Each lists all callers who have managed to work the requisite grouping of contacts:

**US Sweep** – Contacts in each of ten mainland US call region: K3Y/0, K3Y/1, etc. through K3Y/9;

**US & Possessions Sweep** – The US Sweep above plus Hawaii K3Y/KH6, Alaska K3Y/KL7 and Puerto Rico K3Y/KP4. (Thirteen call areas total);

**DX Sweep** – Contacts in all six WAC continental areas: AF, AS, EU, NA, OC, SA;

**Grand Sweep** – Contacts in all the above 19 call regions: US + Possessions + DX.

In addition to the Sweeps categories above there is a Participant Standings page which lists callers who have completed the following six “stats” categories:

**Areas Worked** – Contacts in at least ten and up to the maximum 19 SKM call areas;

**Band-Areas Worked** – Contacts in at least ten Band-Area combinations, up the maximum (more than 150);

**Operators Worked** – Contacts with at least ten different SKM operators up to the maximum of well over 200;

**DX Entities Worked** – Contacts with at least five countries outside the US, up to the maximum participating;

**Canadian Provinces** – Contacts with at least one Canadian Province or Territory, up to the maximum participating;

**US States** – Contacts with at least ten US states. Those who contact SKM operators in all 50 states can receive a SKM WAS QSL three-card set.

## QSL Cards

An official K3Y QSL card will be available to anyone who contacts at least one SKM station. The card lists one QSO per each US call district worked (including KH6, KL7 and KP4), plus each continental DX area (AF, AS, EU, NA, OC, SA): up to a maximum of nineteen QSOs for a complete worldwide "sweep" card (see below).

WAS cards are also available for those who have contacted SKM operators in all 50 US States: fifty contacts on three cards, alphabetically sorted by State.

SKM Operators receive a special operator endorsement stamp on their cards.

Cards will be distributed automatically to anyone who is a member of the SKCC QSL Bureau. Those who are not bureau members may request a K3Y QSL card by submitting a SASE (or PayPal payment for non-US) to the bureau.

More info on the SKM QSL card can be found at [skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-qsl-info](http://skccgroup.com/k3y/k3y-qsl-info)

The Straight Key Century Club was founded on Jan 2nd, 2006 by Tom Peterson (KC9ECI) assisted by Melinda Alsobrook (KI4CIA) and Gordon Benjamin (N6WK). Now, upon the occasion of its 18th Anniversary continues to inspire CW operators and remains dedicated to its founders' of hand keyed Morse Code worldwide (membership total 28,178) goals—preserving the skill and tradition and Radio Telegraphy.

For more information please visit [www.skccgroup.com](http://www.skccgroup.com)

**SKCC SKM 2024 - 18th Anniv.** **QSO Verified** **SKCC SKM 2024 - 18th Anniv.**

QSL: W4AFB MODE: CW 2-WAY QSL: W4AFB MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator	Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/0	1/02	0250	40m	599	N3PDT MO	K3Y/KH6	1/02	0244	40m	579	AH6AA HI
K3Y/1	1/02	2123	15m	579	W1ZAH CT	K3Y/KL7	1/06	2035	17m	559	N1TX AK
K3Y/2	1/02	1225	80m	589	AF2Z NJ	K3Y/KP4	1/05	1951	20m	599	KP4SJ PR
K3Y/3	1/02	2154	30m	559	N3MVX PA	K3Y-AF	1/13	2125	20m	559	ZS6JB3
K3Y/4	1/02	1229	80m	599	K1SP VA	K3Y-AS	1/02	0300	40m	579	4X6FB
K3Y/5	1/02	1221	80m	599	NESA OK	K3Y-EU	1/05	1714	15m	579	F6HKA
K3Y/6	1/04	0205	40m	549	W6TED CA	K3Y-NA	1/02	2150	20m	599	VE1AHX NS
K3Y/7	1/02	1211	40m	579	KE7VE WY	K3Y-OC	1/05	0900	15m	559	ZL2BLQ
K3Y/8	1/02	2128	20m	599	NJ8L OH	K3Y-SA	1/13	2117	15m	569	PY2FRQ
K3Y/9	1/02	2146	20m	569	W9DLN WI	-					

A QSL 'sweep' card with all 19 SKM regions confirmed.

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QSL: AF2Z MODE: CW 2-WAY QSL: AF2Z MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator	Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/0	1/02	0137	20m	549	N3PDT MO	K3Y/KH6	1/02	1915	10m	569	KH6ZM HI
K3Y/1	1/02	1427	40m	579	W1LANA MA	K3Y/KL7	1/02	0114	20m	529	N1TX AK
K3Y/2	1/02	1421	40m	569	N2PEZ NY	K3Y/KP4	1/02	1514	20m	599	KP4RD PR
K3Y/3	1/02	1418	40m	579	K3WK MD	K3Y-AF	1/02	1527	10m	559	ZS6JB3
K3Y/4	1/02	0127	40m	569	N8KR FL	K3Y-AS	1/02	1501	15m	339	4X1WQ
K3Y/5	1/02	1211	80m	559	NESA OK	K3Y-EU	1/02	1314	20m	539	PA3HEN
K3Y/6	1/02	0021	20m	549	W6TED CA	K3Y-NA	1/02	0146	40m	589	VE1AHX NS
K3Y/7	1/02	0054	20m	599	AC2WU AZ	K3Y-OC	1/02	0000	15m	559	ZL2BLQ
K3Y/8	1/02	1918	20m	539	W3NP WV	K3Y-SA	1/02	1310	10m	599	LU7DD
K3Y/9	1/02	0123	40m	599	AA9OM IN	-					

A sweep card with operator endorsement (for SKM Operators).



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#### SKCC SKM WAS – 2024

QSL: W1TAG MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/KL7	1/02	0036	20m	519	N1TX AK
K3Y/4	1/12	2031	17m	579	N4IDH AL
K3Y/5	1/06	0023	20m	549	AA5AD AR
K3Y/7	1/06	2105	20m	599	AC7FF AZ
K3Y/6	1/06	1828	15m	449	N0CW CA
K3Y/0	1/10	1435	20m	429	N0IPA CO
K3Y/1	1/10	2302	160m	569	W1ZAH CT
K3Y/3	1/08	1319	40m	599	WA0CIE DE
K3Y/4	1/17	1452	17m	449	ND9M FL
K3Y/4	1/03	0004	40m	599	W4EAB GA

#### SKCC SKM WAS – 2024

QSL: W1TAG MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/KH6	1/05	2033	12m	569	KH6ZM HI
K3Y/0	1/09	1427	20m	589	K0AF IA
K3Y/7	1/05	2043	15m	559	K7GUD ID
K3Y/9	1/18	2026	17m	599	KC9IL IL
K3Y/9	1/02	0015	40m	579	AA9OM IN
K3Y/0	1/15	0115	40m	559	KE0ZUW KS
K3Y/4	1/11	2007	15m	599	KC4NLD KY
K3Y/5	1/12	2319	17m	559	K5LSU LA
K3Y/1	1/02	1443	40m	599	WBLANA MA
K3Y/3	1/03	0012	80m	579	K3WK MD

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#### SKCC SKM WAS – 2024

QSL: W1TAG MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/1	1/13	0234	40m	559	K1EDG ME
K3Y/8	1/03	1356	40m	599	NL8Z MI
K3Y/0	1/19	1408	20m	569	KE0N MN
K3Y/0	1/02	1845	20m	569	N3PDT MO
K3Y/5	1/02	0027	20m	579	K0RO MS
K3Y/7	1/11	2040	15m	579	WB7BWZ MT
K3Y/4	1/03	1347	40m	599	W1DV NC
K3Y/0	1/11	0023	20m	579	K0SPU ND
K3Y/0	1/15	1542	20m	579	N0HGV NE
K3Y/1	1/10	1420	17m	559	NF10 NH

#### SKCC SKM WAS – 2024

QSL: W1TAG MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/2	1/06	1834	20m	559	AF2Z NJ
K3Y/5	1/12	1942	12m	559	NASM NM
K3Y/7	1/15	1548	15m	559	WV3V NV
K3Y/2	1/05	2344	40m	579	W2SKY NY
K3Y/8	1/09	1930	20m	579	W8YD OH
K3Y/5	1/04	1346	17m	559	NE5A OK
K3Y/7	1/10	1542	20m	559	AK6A OR
K3Y/3	1/08	1443	20m	589	WA3KCP PA
K3Y/1	1/06	2345	80m	579	N1GKE RI
K3Y/4	1/18	2016	15m	589	K83FW SC

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QSL: W1TAG MODE: CW 2-WAY

Station	Date	UTC	Band	RST	Operator
K3Y/0	1/21	1905	10m	599	W0EJ SD
K3Y/4	1/07	0026	30m	599	W4AQ TN
K3Y/5	1/08	2002	20m	579	NNSDE TX
K3Y/7	1/10	2324	20m	579	WA7RCT UT
K3Y/4	1/17	1825	20m	599	N2TNN VA
K3Y/1	1/19	1715	40m	599	K1ARR VT
K3Y/7	1/08	2020	15m	559	K7NXL WA
K3Y/9	1/05	2322	40m	579	W9DLN WI
K3Y/8	1/03	0009	40m	599	W3NP WV
K3Y/7	1/09	1335	30m	559	KE7VE WY

SKM WAS QSLs (Worked All States): 50-QSO three-card set.

## Certificates

Downloadable certificates are available for working the Basic Sweep (K3Y/0 through K3Y/9); plus endorsements for K3Y/KH6, K3Y/KL7, K3Y/KP4 and up to six WAC Continental Areas; and a QRP endorsement:



A SKM Operator Certificate, plus QSO endorsement, is available for those who sign up as regional event stations.



Certificates are available for download [here](#).

#### **SKCC Awards & C/T/S Endorsements**

The contacts you make with SKM Operators are eligible for SKCC operating endorsements and awards. However, all require contacted operators' own licensed callsigns on award applications, not the "K3Y/x" call sign they used. Check the individual award guidelines for other specific requirements.

*Thanks for participating in the SKCC Straight Key Month Event!*

-end-