

2026 AMSAT Field Day Updated

It's that time of year again; summer and Field Day! Each year the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) sponsors Field Day as a "picnic, a campout, practice for emergencies, an informal contest and, most of all, FUN!" The event takes place during a 27-hour period on the fourth weekend of June. For 2026 the event takes place from 1800 UTC on Saturday June 27, 2026 through 2100 UTC on Sunday June 28, 2026. Those who set up prior to 1800 UTC on June 27 can operate only 24 hours. The Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT) promotes its own version of Field Day for operation via the amateur satellites, held concurrently with the ARRL event.

This year should be as much fun as last year since we have more than 10 transponders and repeaters available. For AMSAT purposes, a transponder on a satellite would count as two if you could do phone and CW. We count them by modes, not the satellite names. Users should check the AMSAT status page at <http://www.amsat.org/status/> and the pages at <https://www.amsat.org/two-way-satellites/> for what is available in the weeks leading up to field day. To reduce the amount of time to research each satellite, see the current FM satellite table at <https://www.amsat.org/fm-satellite-frequency-summary/> and the current linear satellite table at <https://www.amsat.org/linear-satellite-frequency-summary/>

If you are considering ONLY the FM voice satellites, there are ISS and SO-50. It might be easier this year to make that one FM contact for the ARRL bonus points with so many FM birds. The congestion on FM LEO satellites is always so intense that we must continue to limit their use to one-QSO-per-FM-satellite. This includes the International Space Station. You will be allowed one QSO if the ISS is operating Voice.

It was suggested during past field days that a control station be allowed to coordinate contacts on the FM satellites. There is nothing in the rules that would prohibit this. This is nothing more than a single station working multiple QSO's. If a station were to act as a control station and give QSO's to every other field day station, the control station would still only be allowed to turn in one QSO per FM satellite while the other station would be able to submit one QSO.

The format for the message exchange on the ISS or other digital packet satellite is an unproto packet to the other station (3-way exchange required) with all the same information as normally exchanged for ARRL Field Day,
e.g.:

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W6NWX de KK5DO 2A STX
KK5DO de W6NWX QSL 5A SDG
W6NWX de KK5DO QSL
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If you have worked the satellites on Field Day in recent years, you may have noticed a lot of good contacts can be made on some of the less-populated, low-earth-orbit satellites like AO-7, RS-44, AO-73, FO-29 and JO-97. During Field Day the transponders come alive like 20 meters on a weekend. The good news is that the transponders on these satellites will support multiple simultaneous contacts. The bad news is that you can't use FM, just low duty-cycle modes like SSB and CW.

THE 2026 AMSAT FIELD DAY RULES

The AMSAT Field Day 2026 event is open to all Amateur Radio operators. Amateurs are to use the exchange as specified in ARRL rules for Field Day. The AMSAT competition is to encourage the use of all amateur satellites, both analog and digital. Note that no points will be credited for any contacts beyond the ONE allowed via each single-channel FM satellite. Operators are encouraged not to make any extra contacts via these satellites (Ex: SO-50). CW contacts and digital contacts are worth three points as outlined below.

1. Analog Transponders

ARRL rules apply, except:

- Each phone, CW, and digital segment ON EACH SATELLITE TRANSPONDER is considered to be a separate band.

- CW and digital (RTTY, PSK-31, etc.) contacts count THREE points each. ***This year we are not sure if any of the satellites will be sending an SSTV image. You should still monitor RS58S and even the ISS. There may be other satellites that transmit SSTV during Field Day. Please include the image you captured with your submission.***

- Stations may only count one (1) completed QSO on any single channel FM satellite. If a satellite has multiple modes such as V/u and L/s modes both turned on, one contact each is allowed. If the PBBS is on - see Pacsats below, ISS (1 phone and 1 digital), Contacts with the ISS crew will count for one contact if they are active. PCSat (I, II, etc.) (1 digital),

- The use of more than one transmitter at the same time on a single satellite transponder is prohibited.

2. Digital Transponders

We have only APRS digipeaters, possibly the ISS and SONATE-2. IO-86 will be turned on for Field Day over Central America which gives a 5 degree elevation over Miami and 1 degree elevation over Houston. Thanks to Yono, YD0NXX/N5SNN for letting us know.

Satellite digipeat QSO's and APRS short-message contacts are worth three points each but must be complete verified two-way exchanges. **The one contact per FM satellite is not applied to digital transponders.**

The use of terrestrial gateway stations or internet gateways (i.e. EchoLink, IRLP, etc.) to uplink/downlink is not allowed.

For the Pacsats or 'Store and Forward' hamsats, each satellite is considered a separate band. Do not post "CQ" messages. Simply upload ONE greeting message to each satellite and download as many greeting messages as possible from each satellite. The subject of the uploaded file should be posted as Field Day Greetings, addressed to ALL. The purpose of this portion of the competition is to demonstrate digital satellite communications to other Field Day participants and observers. Do not reply to the Field Day Greetings addressed to ALL.

The following uploads and downloads count as three-point digital contacts.

- (a) Upload of a satellite Field Day Greetings file (one per satellite).
- (b) Download of Satellite Field Day Greetings files posted by other stations. Downloads of non-Field Day files or messages not addressed to ALL are not to be counted for the event. Save DIR listings and message files for later "proof of contact."

Please note AMSAT uploaded messages do not count for QSO points under the ARRL rules.

Sample Satellite Field Day Greetings File:

Greetings from W5MSQ Field Day Satellite station near Katy, Texas, EL-29, with 20 participants, operating class 2A, in the AMSAT-Houston group with the Houston Amateur Television Society and the Houston QRP club. All the best and 73!

Note that the message stated the call, name of the group, operating class, where they were located (the grid square would be helpful) and how many operators were in attendance.

3. Operating Class

Stations operating portable and using emergency power (as per ARRL Field Day rules) are in a separate operating class from those at home connected to commercial power. On the report form simply check off Emergency or Commercial for the Power Source and be sure to specify your ARRL operating class (2A, 1C, etc.).

AND FINALLY...

The Satellite Summary Sheet should be used for submission of the AMSAT Field Day competition and be received by KK5DO (e-mail) by 11:59 P.M. CDT, Tuesday, July 28, 2026. **This year, we are using the same due date as the ARRL.** The only method for submitting your log is via e-mail to kk5do@amsatnet.com or kk5do@arrl.net. No mail-in entries.

Add photographs or other interesting information that can be used in an article for the Journal.

You will receive an e-mail back (within one or two days) from me when I receive your e-mail submission. If you do not receive a confirmation message, then I have not received your submission. Try sending it again or send it to my other e-mail address.

Certificates will be awarded for the first-place emergency power/portable station at the AMSAT General Meeting and Space Symposium in the fall of 2026 in Jacksonville, FL. Certificates will also be awarded to the second and third place portable/emergency operation in addition to the first-place home station running on emergency power. A station submitting high, award-winning scores will be requested to send in dupe sheets for analog contacts and message listings for digital downloads.

You may have multiple rig difficulties, antenna failures, computer glitches, generator disasters, tropical storms, and there may even be satellite problems, but the goal is to test your ability to operate in an emergency situation. Try different gear. Demonstrate satellite operations to hams that don't even know the HAMSATS exist. Test your equipment. Avoid making more than ONE contact via the FM-only voice HAMSATS or the ISS, and enjoy the event!

This form is designed to allow for easy editing in a Word Processor.

AMSAT Satellite Summary Sheet - 2026

Satellite and number of Voice QSO's (1 point each)

Satellite Name 1 (example)

Satellite and number of CW/RTTY/PSK31 etc QSO's (3 points each)

Satellite Name 6 (example)

Satellite and Up/Downloads (3 points each)

Satellite Name 3 (example)

Score Calculation

Total Voice QSO's	6 x 1 =	6
Total CW/RTTY/PSK31 QSO's x 3	=	0
Total Up/Downloads or SSTV x 3	3 x 3 =	9
Grand Total	=	15

Please provide the following information

Your Field Day Callsign

Your Group Name

ARRL Field Day Classification

ARRL Section

Power Source (Select 1)

Emergency

Commercial

Your name and home call

Home address

Any Comments

And... please attach pictures.