

CQ DX (what do you mean?)

Any Ham that has been active for any amount of time has heard someone calling “CQ DX”, and this is true for most bands. Not so much on VHF and above but it is common on the HF bands.

Exactly what is meant by this? DX is an abbreviation meaning “distance”, and if someone answers who the caller does not consider DX, sometimes they refuse to work that station, sometimes they get downright nasty. This is not good at all.

When I first got started with Amateur Radio I was a Novice, CW only and a maximum power of 75 Watts. I had a converted military surplus ARC-5 single-band transmitter, and had a dipole antenna maybe 10-15 feet off of the ground, and crystal controlled. I was on 80 Meters, at a later date on 40 Meters. I was running closer to 50 Watts than 75 Watts. I was a teenager (barely) and lived in Southern California. Real ‘DX’ for me was making a contact to the East Coast of the USA. Actually anything East of the Mississippi River was DX for me.

In later years I got interested in CW and SSB on Two Meters and from Southern California (San Diego) I was able to work stations in the San Francisco and Sacramento area and for me that was real DX. Now I live in Arizona and working all of the adjacent states is the big challenge. Any contact over about 150 miles is DX for me on that band. I have worked all adjacent states I add.

Six Meters, who knows what DX means? To some it means a contact over 600 miles, to others it means ‘another country’, be it Mexico or Canada even.

What is DX on one band is not DX on another band. DX is in the mind of the caller, only he or she knows their own meaning. My meaning may not be the same as yours, yet I am expected to know yours.

I have adopted the policy where I consider anyone calling CQ DX as rude. It is saying; ‘unless you meet my criteria for DX (whatever it is), I do not want to talk to you’. I do not answer a station calling “CQ DX” unless there is no doubt it is DX, like Europe or Asia. Even there, if I am on the East Coast of the USA I consider Europe DX but California is not DX even though it is about the same distance! I do not ever call “CQ DX”, and I will answer anyone who responds to my CQ call.

The next time you think of calling CQ DX, stop and consider what you are doing, and the message you are giving the hams that are just enjoying themselves and want to make contacts. You are saying, in effect, a person a long distance away is worth more than one that is closer. After all any Ham is just one person with a hobby, no matter where he is, near or far. You may be working on DXCC but the other guy might be working towards W.A.S. I am here to say, without special calling, I have worked the world and Worked All States many times over. I have a pile of meaningless awards. I work “DX” by watching for those I consider DX, then calling them.

One last thought, if you are running QRP with a makeshift antenna, your idea of ‘DX’ is surely different than the station with a big beam and running the legal limit.