

The DXAC began a comprehensive review of the DXCC rules in December 2024 which concluded in October 2025. Each area of the current rules was discussed along with other related items that are integral to the DXCC program.

This report is a summary of notes taken during the various sessions. Recommendations will follow at the end of the report.

Many changes in the DXAC membership occurred during the past year:

- **Board Liaison** - We were advised in January 2025 that Carl Luetzelschwab (K9LA) would be retiring from the ARRL Board and that David Norris (K5UZ) would be taking his place.
- **Great Lakes Division** - Ted Pauck (K8NA) became an SK in October 2024 and Stan Arnett (AC8W) had assumed his position. Stan stepped down in June of 2025 and was replaced by Dennis Ward (KT8X).
- **New England Division** - Recently, Bob Beaudet (W1YRC) has been in ill health and the Division Director Tom Frenaye (K1KI) is actively seeking a replacement.
- **Roanoke Division** - In September 2024, Gary Dixon (K4MQG) stepped down from his 36-year tenure as the Roanoke Division Representative. Lou Dietrich (N2TU) became his replacement. Lou brought a vast amount of expertise to the DXAC. Lou resigned from the DXAC in August 2025 shortly before he unexpectedly became a SK. Hal Turley (W8HC) was asked take Lou's role and has been a most welcome addition to the committee.
- **Southeastern Division** - Dick Baxter (K5TF) became unable to retain his position as the Southeastern Representative in March of 2025 due to poor health and Hal Kennedy (N4GG) eventually filled that role.
- **Southwestern Division** - Bill Shell (N6WS) took over for John Schroeder (N6QQ) in late June 2025.

Specific meeting dates are listed below – all were held on Zoom:

12 December, 2024

9, 30 January 2025

20 February

13 March

3, 24 April

26 June

31 July

21 August

4 September

2, 30 October

Each session was dedicated to one specific topic and generally followed the DXAC rules structure. Other pertinent subjects were also discussed.

12 December, 2024: The primary focus of this meeting was to identify topics most relevant to members and those in the DX community. The most prevalent responses were:

- RIB operation and licensing
- Remote operation
- The future of the DXCC program as a whole
- Inactive entities

- The possibility of additional DXCC endorsements
- Review of entities that may no longer meet current criteria
- Avoid the push for instant gratification, current rules have stood the “test of time”

10 January, 2025: RIB (rig in a box) was discussed. The following was determined by the committee:

- RIB is an acceptable means of communications under the current DXCC rules.
- Specific requirements should be spelled out regarding licensing and any additional requirements put forth by the entity where the RIB operation takes place.
- Obtain feedback after each RIB DXpedition has concluded to determine if additional guidance may be needed.

30 January & February 20, 2025: Inactive entities and correspondence to the committee.

Each committee member was asked their thoughts regarding inactive entities and whether entities should be “deleted” or deemed “inactive”. A summary of these comments includes:

- Honor the history of the program as it has withstood the “test of time”
- The concern of unintended consequences
- Not in favor of “deletions” – how would “inactive” be defined?
- The reason behind some entities being inactive (political, environmental, physical restrictions)
- Consider an incremental type Honor Roll award
- Small but vocal contingent suggesting deletions or an inactive list
- BS7 (Scarborough Reef) is consistently mentioned
- Various considerations come into play while working towards the Honor Roll such as sun spot cycle, family matters (marriage, passing of loved ones, job changes, moving) and so on. It is strictly not what has been active and when
- Question the ability to track deletions or inactive entities if those changes were made
- Don’t change rules just to satisfy the “instant gratification” mindset
- Offer assistance to governmental agencies regarding activation of protected areas

13 March, 2025: Section 1 of the current DXCC rules evaluation

As a follow-up to a previous session, the following was relayed to the group regarding requirements for RIB operation:

- Proof of license
- Proof of permission to operate from that entity
- Proof there was a physical presence at that location
- Other documentation may be requested by that particular licensing authority (especially if outside the USA and territories as the FCC has no jurisdiction)
- All situations are not the same

In regards to Section 1. Basic Rules, all seemed adequate, up to date and mainly pertaining to fairly static information. It was noted that CW awards were not included until 1975.

Section II. DXCC List Criteria seems to be the most contentious area of the current DXCC Rules. The following questions and comments were raised:

- Since there seems to be no specific compilation of all current DXCC entities and when or how they were accepted, should an effort be made to compile that information?

- Several “rare” entities have been inhabited for years but inactive, is there any way to encourage amateur licensing in those locations?
- Many entities in the past (though inactive for years) eventually were on the air. Might this become the same case for currently inactive countries?
- An “inactive” list is unpopular with the majority of DXAC representatives
- If there were to be deletions, has any specific criteria or guidelines been suggested?
- Avoid over regulation, be mindful of current achievements and other awards
- Be cognizant of new hams and their perception of the DXCC program
- Avoid unintended consequences as rule change ramifications would most certainly affect other areas of the program and awards

3 April, 2025: David Minster (NA2AA), CEO of the ARRL addressed the DXAC on the recent SV/A DXpedition by Martti Lane (OH2BH) and others. This discussion revolved around the validity and possible approval of the operation.

The committee was very pleased with this interaction as this would be the first time David has attended such a meeting. Details of the circumstances surrounding the application have been documented elsewhere but were presented to the group for their evaluation and interpretation. Each member in attendance was able to ask specific questions and voice their opinions on approval or denial of the operation. It was mentioned that we were given the opportunity to comment but ultimately, it was not the DXAC’s decision to make.

After the discussion, David indicated Bart (W9JJ) would be putting out a press release regarding the status of the operation. It was presented to the DX community the next day, 4 April, 2025.

The meeting continued with the following questions being posed to members to prepare for the 24 April meeting:

- When were specific entities accepted into the DXCC program?
- What criteria was used to accept those countries at that time?
- If mistakes were made (regardless of when) they are still mistakes – how would that be handled?

In closing, NA2AA mentioned that the DXAC is a wonderful asset and we were thanked for our continued contributions and guidance regarding the DXCC program.

24 April, 2025: Section II. DXCC List Criteria

This seems to be the area of most interest. Input from the DX community mentions inactive entities (Those which have not been on the air for a significant amount of time) and entities which some feel should be deleted from the DXCC list entirely.

Some felt there may be special cases, particularly entities whose DXCC inclusion comes to question frequently, that should be investigated more closely. Others expressed their desire to find as much information as possible on all current entities, while acknowledging that there may be little historical information available to us.

It was also suggested to review all entities that do not meet today's criteria.

Deletions were felt to just hasten the path to the Honor Roll and there may be no other advantage to the program unless they were originally approved in error. Specific mention was made once again of BS7; would deleting that entity provide any advantage to the DX Community?

The previous “separate administration” rule was mentioned with respect to the United Kingdom entities and some others.

26 June, 2025: Special meeting regarding Chagos (VQ9).

John (K9EL) advised the DXAC of the following:

“The British Government has signed the deal giving Chagos back to Mauritius in exchange for a 99 year lease on Diego Garcia. I have already received several inquiries from Central Division hams about the DXCC status of VQ9. I suspect that VQ9 itself would remain as is, similar to ZC4, KG4, etc. However, there are other islands in Chagos, which will now belong to Mauritius.”

The treaty was signed on 22 May, 2025 by the governments of the UK and Mauritius.

Several members of the DXAC further investigated this proposition and found several interesting items within the treaty (which is published here <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10273/CBP-10273.pdf>)

Specifics can be found in the treaty but may not have particular jurisdiction on a new entity.

We believe at this time a new entity or entities are not currently warranted but that a further review may be required in the future – take a “wait and see” approach due to inconclusive evidence.

31 July, 2025: Section III. Accreditation Criteria.

The committee was pleased to welcome Bill (N6WS, Southwestern Div) to the DXAC.

Bart (W9JJ) gave the group an overview of current practices regarding acceptance and verification of DXpedition or entity activation. Current tools such as GPS, social media (with pictures and specifics of the location) as well as previous experiences by former activations are used to verify the application.

An opportunity was then given to ask specific questions on those practices or particular entities in question.

Saul (K2XA) asked if a searchable database could be incorporated allowing the ability to examine activation and specifically if they were disapproved and why. This would be helpful for proposed DXpeditions as well as giving the community specifics if an operation was rejected.

The committee felt that the current rules were sufficient and have served the DXCC program well and that no further suggestions be made.

21 August, 2025: Section IV. Field Checking of QSL Cards

The DXAC welcomed Dennis (KT8X, Great Lakes Div) to the group and in honor of the passing of Lou (N2TU), each committee member simultaneously “called” him as Lou, with his vast experience DXpedition wise would NOT have wanted silence. The following aspects of the Field Checking program were examined and discussed:

- Field checking of 160m cards
- Appointed card checkers if there is a lack of such services at certain events
- John, VE1JS mentioned that there were no French speaking card checkers for areas of Canada where that is the primary language
- Conversion from Canadian to USA dollars
- Handling cash as opposed to many other payment options
- The number of countries a card check must hold to qualify was felt to be too low given the ease in which entities can be worked and confirmed today. A level of at least 200 to 250 (mixed) was suggested
- A written test was a prior requirement and a return to that should be considered
- Some card checkers are less willing to travel than in the past
- Application submittal requirements (mailed, scanned)
- Card checkers mentioned they note questions they may have on the application and that the league determines the validity of that card

The general consensus by the committee was there needs to be clarification in certain areas of the current rules and a suggestion of those areas will be submitted for review:

- Who may check 160m cards? Must the card checker hold 160m DXCC?
- Increase number of DXCC countries required for card checkers, 250 was suggested.
- Bring back the written test for new card checkers.

5 September, 2025: Special meeting regarding recent David (NA2AA) podcast mentioning the DXCC program.

The group convened to discuss comments on a recent DX Mentor podcast by ARRL CEO David Minster (NA2AA). Comments were made toward the end of the broadcast and were overwhelmingly positive towards the DXAC.

Some incorrect information was relayed regarding the deletion of Kingman Reef and mentioned a lack of communication between the DXAC and the general membership. Note that DXAC was not involved in the deletion of Kingman.

Several awards programs were also referenced and those would not fall into DXAC jurisdiction (but the DXAC has mentioned possible awards in the past that were acted upon years later).

Members did suggest that the DXAC (or the DXCC program) was not on the discussion agenda of the podcast and misinformation was possibly relayed due to lack of investigation on the reason for the Kingman deletion.

2 October, 2025: Continuing discussion on inactive or deleted entities

An in-depth review was submitted by a sub-committee regarding QSL Card Checking and proposed recommendations. It will be attached at the end of this report.

A review of all current DXCC entities was sent to all members of the DXAC and included the inclusion date in the program and a reason given if available.

Each member was then asked their opinion on the following:

- Inactive entities
- Adding new entities
- Deleting entities (that do not meet current criteria)

Overall, members felt that no dramatic changes need to be made especially considering unintended consequences.

Udo (NI0G) mentioned the recent appearance of E4 and that lack of activity from that entity indicating that countries can activate at any time.

Hal (W8HC) indicated that of the top 25 wanted countries, only 3 had resident population.

Sal (KX2A) commented on the possibility that most complaints on approving new entities may be coming from those DXpeditioners wanting to activate a potential new DXCC entity.

Chris (K2CS) remarked on the original task – a review of current DXCC rules and not an undertaking of deleting inactive or approving new entities.

A recommendation was made to continue the work that John (K9EL) and others have done regarding the approval of the current DXCC list. A sub-committee was formed consisting of the following:

- John Sweeney (K9EL Central Div)
- Mike Cizek (W0VTT Dakota Div)
- Udo Heinze (NI0G Midwest Div)
- Bill Shell (N6WS Southwestern Div)

The focus of the sub-committee would be to continue to investigate when and why certain entities (those that do not meet current criteria) were approved (if information is available).

A recommendation was made by Steve (N4JQQ) to request digitization of available DXCC documentation for easier accessibility by all.

30 October, 2025 Review of John (K9EL) sub-committee findings

It was reported to the committee that Bob (W1YRC) DXAC Representative for the New England Division has been in ill health and that the Division Director Tom (K1KI) is actively seeking a replacement.

The sub-committee report was distributed to DXAC representatives for comment several days before the meeting. Discussion was held on the ramifications and possible unintended consequences of the report. It was decided that the initial report would be reviewed by the sub-committee and resubmitted for DXAC members to evaluate. These suggestions will NOT become a part of the final report and will be further discussed in upcoming DXAC sessions.

Final findings and recommendations:

Section I. Basic Rules.

- It was felt by the committee that the rules were adequate and up to date. No changes should be considered.

Section II. DXCC List Criteria.

- A final recommendation by the committee will be made in **TBD**

Section III. Accreditation Criteria.

- Current procedures (and available technology) continue to provide an adequate means of operation verification and no recommendations are being made (attached with proposed changes).

Section IV. Field Checking of QSL Cards

- The following recommendations should be considered to allow for better definition of current QSL checking guidelines:
 - Who may check 160m cards? Must the card checker hold 160m DXCC?
 - Increase number of DXCC countries required for card checkers, 250 was suggested.
 - Bring back the written test for new card checkers.

Additional suggestions and recommendations:

- Investigate digitization of available DXCC program documentation
- Reevaluate the percentage of countries needed for Honor Roll
- Revisit the 5 year entity evaluation rule for entities added in error
- Consider a “stepped” approach to the Honor Roll adding additional milestones
- Assemble a database on DXpeditions that were not approved and the reason behind those decisions

In conclusion, the DXAC continues to be available for issues regarding the DXCC program or related items that the expertise of the committee may be utilized.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

Chairman, ARRL DX Advisory Committee