



# **TRAINING MANUAL PART 2 - ENGINEERING CLEARANCE**

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JOE SCHEPIS  
TRAINING COORDINATOR

This is the second part of the two-part Training Manual. This section deals with matters of concern to those about to take their Engineering Clearance test. Sports, News, or Public Affairs board operators, new DJs with prior on-air experience, or anyone who needs to operate WCDB's transmitter but not do a music show, should also use this manual since they must pass the Engineering clearance too. Everyone should also have read Part 1 of the Training Manual even if they did not make a demo tape. All persons cleared to speak on the air have to have basic knowledge of how to play carts, CDs, and records even if they do not do a DJ music show.

Before your next class, read the next section on Rules as well as the section on Lesson 5.

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## **Rules, Policies, Procedures**

WCDB is an organization governed by a Constitution, as mandated by its standing with the Student Association. The Constitution states the many policies of the station, as well as rules for electing new management each year. The Constitution is contained in the station Handbook. Also contained in the Handbook are guidelines on station policy, election of the General Manager, and the conduct of the weekly Executive Staff Meeting. You will get your Handbook on or before the completion of your training at WCDB.

The executives of the station meet each Sunday at 7 PM to discuss station business. This meeting is open to all WCDB members, who are welcome to stop by and discuss any matter with the management. Any station member who attends ten or more meetings per academic year gets voting power for the following March's election of the next General Manager.

WCDB is a large organization with many purposes and goals. It is understandable that there are many rules to make sure the best interests of the station and its members are met. To enforce these rules, the General Manager, Program Director, and Chief Engineer have the power to suspend any member from doing their show on the station for any length of time. Suspension is used rarely, but is a consequence the management is not afraid to use when problems persist among WCDB members.

Among WCDB's rules are some critical rules each member must know and will be tested on during their clearance process. There are other rules too, as listed in the Handbook, but these are the ones you will need to know for your Engineering Clearance. Be sure to commit these to memory:

1. The station is only open for business Monday through Friday 9 AM to 5 PM. It is closed to the public at all other times. The door to the station must be locked during any hours the station is not open. Further, any member who enters the station when it is closed must sign in on the Security Sheet in Master Control.

2. Guests are not permitted in the station when it is closed except if permission has been given in advance, in which case one guest is allowable. Permission must be given by the Station Manager, Chief Engineer, or Program Director. Guests must sign in along with the WCDB member, and are the direct and sole responsibility of that member. Violation of station rules by guests will be treated as though the member made them. Remember, your guest may NOT speak on the air.

3. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the WCDB offices or studios at any time. Food and drink is permitted only in the lobby and Music and Executive offices, never in the hallways or studios beyond the lobby.

4. Drugs and alcohol are not permitted anywhere on University property, including WCDB. You may not operate the station under the influence of any controlled substance.

5. No one may speak on the air who is not a fully cleared WCDB DJ or newscaster. Guests to be interviewed must be cleared in advance and may only appear during shows which normally include guests. This rule applies to people in the studio as well as people calling in on the phone.

6. Tapes to be played over the air must be cleared by the Program Director before airing. The PD will initial the cart or reel to be played when it is cleared. Cassettes may not be played over the air directly, even if they are prerecorded music tapes.

7. You may not accept collect phone calls from any phone in the WCDB offices or studios. You may not make long distance calls or any local calls not in direct support of WCDB business from any WCDB phone.

8. Each WCDB member will be issued an ID card, which must be carried by that person. If a member wishes to enter the station and cannot identify themselves to the DJ on the air, or any member of the University or Campus Center staff, they will be turned away.

9. The production studio is only open to cleared Producers, who must be trained in production to obtain their clearance. DJs who are found in production without direct supervision of a Producer will be suspended.

You should know these rules and be prepared to live by them. You will be asked about many of these rules during your Engineering Clearance. If you are not familiar with them, you will not pass. If you have questions about the rules, ask someone in WCDB management about them.

## Lesson 5. Additional Technical Procedures and Equipment

To make your demo tape, you learned how to use the console and various source machinery, and make them work together to create a radio show. In order to pass your engineering clearance, you will also need to learn the following pieces of equipment which pertain to operating WCDB as a radio station. You will be tested on just about all the information in this section, so know it well!

### 1. Reel to Reel Tape Machine

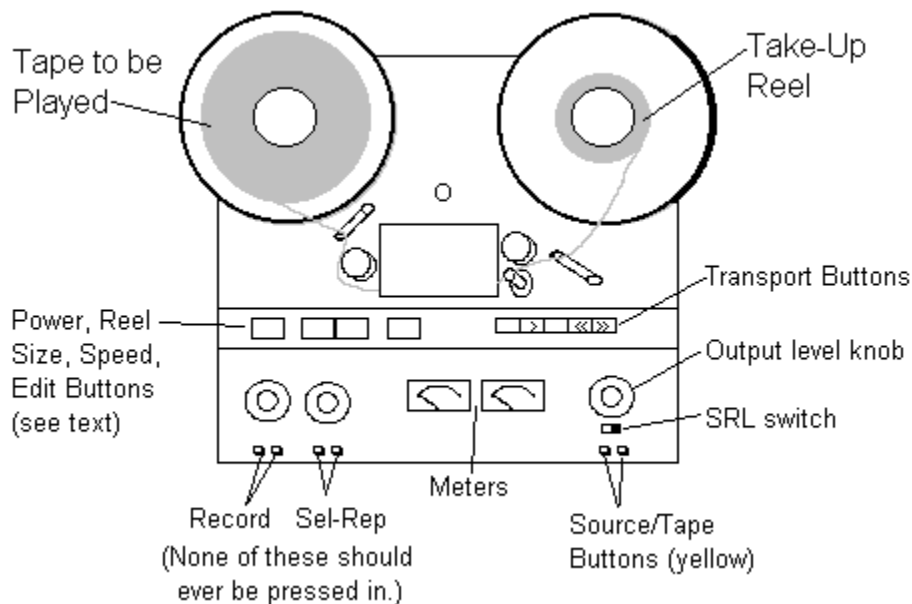
WCDB uses reel to reel tape as its main recording medium for prerecorded shows. This is because the sound quality that reel tape provides is very high. Modern digital formats like DAT do sound somewhat better, but don't offer the ease of editing and assembling shows that reel tape provides. Therefore, Reel to Reel tape machines are located in all studios. This includes the Training Studio, so you will have a place to practice operating the machine.

Even though you will not need to play reel to reel tapes during your DJ show, there are times when you will need to play some prerecorded material. The station does not want to worry about if certain DJs can operate the machines or not, so it is required that all DJs know how to at least play a reel tape on the air. You do not have to know how to record, so that will not be covered here. If you are interested in recording, you should join the Production staff so that you can learn all about recording, editing, and live sound mixing, and have access to the Production Studio on an unrestricted basis. (People who are not Producers are not allowed in the Production Studio.)

The machines WCDB uses are made by Otari. For this reason, many people call them "Otaris." The machines have a lot of controls, but only a few of them are necessary to make a tape play. First, let's cover how to load a tape on the machine. The tape to be loaded should be placed on the left spindle of the machine (see diagram next page) and the tape itself should wind off the tape from the left of that reel. An empty reel (called the Take-Up reel) goes on the right spindle. Some reels WCDB uses have very large center holes, so adapter hubs must be used to place these reels on the much thinner machine spindles. These hubs are also used to lock reels down on the machine. Note: ALWAYS USE THE SAME REEL SIZES ON EACH SPINDLE. Not only doesn't it make sense to use a take-up reel smaller than the reel full of tape (since not all the played tape would fit on the take-up reel); the machine will not be able to

wind the tape properly. In a pinch, you can use a larger take up reel than the supply reel if you absolutely cannot find an empty reel of the same size. Your trainer will show you how to load and play tapes on the Otari, so pay attention and make sure to practice on your own.

As soon as you've loaded the tape reels, it's time to thread the tape from the left reel onto the right reel and make the end of the tape stay inside the second reel. This is the hardest part, so make sure you follow directions exactly. Turn the left reel with tape on it until about 12 inches of tape is dangling from the reel. Grab the tape just below the edge of the reel and pull the tape around to the right side of the spring tension post closest to that reel. Guide the tape around the left side of the rubber wheel just below that tension post. The tape should now have a clear path to wrap underneath the head block, so wrap the tape underneath. Be sure there are no twists in the tape as it comes off the reel. Once under the head block, the tape must pass between the rotating metal post (called the Capstan) and the rubber idler wheel just above it. If the tape does not pass between these two items, the machine will not pull the tape at the right speed. As the tape passes between these two, continue threading it underneath the fixed silver metal post toward the right side spring tension post. This post will be nearly horizontal when no tape is on the machine, but when you load tape, the tape will pull this lever up and you will hear the machine's motor start up.



If you do not have enough tape to reach the take-up reel, just turn the supply reel counter-clockwise until you have enough. When the end of the tape can reach the reel, you must now make the tape stay wrapped around the reel. To do this, pull about an inch or two of tape through one of the holes in the reel flange and press it down against the front of the reel itself with your thumb. It's okay if you wrinkle the end of the tape a little bit.

With your thumb holding the free edge of tape down, turn the reel counterclockwise to pull in all the loose tape slack. Don't let go of the tape yet. Before the tape will stay in place without your thumb, you will have to rotate the take up reel at least 1.5 turns. You may find it difficult to turn the reels since the supply reel will not unwind its tape willingly. Use your other hand to turn the supply reel as you also turn the take-up reel. Soon you will reach a point where the tape is affixed to the take-up reel by itself.

What you have just experienced is exactly why they invented cassettes. This is not an easy task to learn, and we don't expect you to learn it just by reading about it. Your trainer will need to show you many times how to do this, and you must also try it yourself many times. You may never enjoy loading tape on the machine, but as long as you can make a reel tape play, you're in business. The rest of this section deals with playing the tape on the air.

The diagram of the machine above does not show every control on the Otari, but it does show the more often needed ones. Before the tape can be played, a few buttons and switches must be set. First,

make sure the machine is turned on by pressing the power button. The meters will light up when the machine is on. Next, set the Reel Size switch according to the size of the reels you just put on the machine. If you used the large 10.5" reels with a large center holes, the button should be out. Any other size reels are considered Small, so push the Size button in. Next, check the Speed setting. The button should be in to select slow speed (7.5 inches per second) since that is the standard speed of tapes used at WCDB. Always use low speed unless the tape label says otherwise. Also, near these buttons is the Edit button, which also has a light next to it. The button should be out, and the light should be off. If not, the machine will play the tape but the take-up reel will not turn. If this happens, check this switch.

Along the bottom are many pairs of small buttons. All of them should be in the out position except the rightmost two, the Source/Tape buttons. These buttons are yellow (or white) in color, and must be pressed in to play a tape. Just above these two buttons is a small switch labeled "SRL." This switch should be On (slide it to the right). The red light next to SRL should light up. These are all the settings you will have to make before you play the tape. It may seem like a lot to check all these things, but people like to press buttons randomly on our equipment, and it is important to know how to set any button that can make a difference in using the machine.

Now you can start the machine playing by using the Transport buttons. These work like you might expect them to, and control playing, rewinding, fast forwarding, and stopping the machine. The orange button is Record, but you won't be pressing that one, right? Even if you did, if you set up the buttons the way you were supposed to, the machine would not record anyway.

Now that the machine is playing the tape, use the Console to put the channel for the Otari in Cue so you can hear the sound. When you hear the recording begin, you can cue up the tape just like you would a vinyl record. Your trainer will show you how to use the Cue lever to hear what's on the tape when the machine is not running. Always leave the Cue lever up unless you are cueing up a tape. If you don't, you can really cause damage to a lot of equipment including the speakers and your ears.

There is a timer on each machine which keeps track of the elapsed time of the tape as it plays, or even as it rewinds or fast forwards. When you cue up a reel to play on the air, you can reset the counter to 0:00:00 by pressing the Reset button. Then, when you play the tape, the timer will let you know how close you are to the completion of the tape (assuming you know how long the program on the tape is).

To sum up this section, watch your trainer use the machine, then practice a lot yourself. Use this section as a reference. You must master this machine in order to pass your Engineering Clearance.

## **2. Transmitter Remote Control**

WCDB has its offices and studios in the Campus Center building, but the actual transmitter (what makes the radio waves WCDB sends out) is located at the top of one of the dorm towers. To turn the transmitter on and off, and to check up on its operation, the station uses a remote control. Without this, according to the FCC, you would have to have a licensed person stationed at the transmitter, watching it. This would not be a fun job at any salary. But for free, all DJs can operate the transmitter while they do their show.

Controlling the transmitter is a privilege only given to holders of an FCC license. When you become a DJ, you will get an FCC license through WCDB. (If you have one already, great.) The license is not to let you be a DJ or even to speak over the air. The license is to let you operate the transmitter. Any time the transmitter is on the air, a licensed person must be located within close proximity of the remote control. This person will also sign in on the Logs (more about logs next week).

So enough about this. How does it work? Very easily, you'll be happy to know. There is a small panel in Master Control which has several buttons and an LED numerical readout. The readout shows different electrical measurements for the transmitter. Since there is one readout, a button is used to change the "channel" of the readout to show different measurements. There are eight channels, but only channels five through eight are used at WCDB.

At certain times during the day, the DJ on duty at that time takes a set of readings and writes them down in the Program log on the Transmitter page. To take transmitter readings, simply press the Channel button until channel 5 is displayed, and then write down the measurement exactly as the readout shows. Then press the Channel button three more times, each time writing down the readout value for channels 6, 7, and 8. That's it!

The remote control also can turn the transmitter off and on. This is done by pushing Channel until you get to channel 5. There is a pair of buttons on the panel with up and down arrows above them. To turn the transmitter on, press the up arrow button, and to turn it off press the down arrow button. This only works when you are set to channel 5. Also, the readout will show whether or not the transmitter has been turned on or off. If there is a number close to 50 on the readout, the transmitter is on the air. If the readout drops to near zero, the transmitter is off the air. Don't assume the arrow button will work every time. Always make sure the readout shows zero before believing the transmitter is off, and that it shows a number near 50 when it is on.

So what do these readouts mean? They are numbers that tell the operator if the transmitter is working properly. As the operator on duty, you have to know whether the numbers mean something is wrong. They are just numbers, after all. How do you know if something is wrong? That's pretty easy too. If channel 8 shows a reading higher than 104, or channel 7 shows a number higher than 2.0, there is a problem. The other numbers are just values we want to keep track of in the log. You don't have to remember the actual numbers that mean there is a problem. The numbers are posted in the back of the Copy Book in Master Control. Check the numbers against these every time you take readings. **If the number is out of acceptable range, you must call the Chief Engineer immediately!** Out of tolerance readings could mean the station is operating illegally, so we don't ever want that to happen. **NEVER PRESS ANY BUTTON ON THE REMOTE OTHER THAN CHANNEL, UP, AND DOWN!**

**Signing On and Signing Off the Station** Since the remote is used during sign-on and sign-off, here is how to use the remote in that context:

**TO SIGN ON** At the top of the hour, or at the time you are ready to begin playing programming on the air, go to channel 5 and press the Up arrow. The readout should show a number near 50. You should also hear a thump on the air when the transmitter comes on. **The first item you play on the air must be the Sign-On announcement, either read live on the air by you, or played from the Sign-On Cart.** This must always be the first thing broadcast! Once the announcement is through, just begin your show as usual. **Write down the exact time you signed on in the program log cover.**

**TO SIGN OFF** At the end of the broadcast day, after your final song and announcements, you must air the Sign-Off announcement, either live from the script or from the Sign-Off cart. This must be the very last thing you broadcast. You may not speak after the announcement, nor play any other music. When the announcement is over, press Channel until channel 5 is displayed. Press the Down button and make sure the readout shows zero. **Write down the exact time you signed off in the program log cover.**

After sign-off, assuming you are going home, please turn out all the lights and lock the station door. Also, it should be mentioned here that **you may not sign off the station without permission.** If the DJ normally on after you does not show up, you must call the Program Director to see if he or she can get a

last minute replacement. If you are told you may sign off, then it is permissible. If you are normally the last DJ on the air on a given day, you may assume permission is given to you to sign off after your show.

### **Alternative Rock Format [Rock Djs Only]**

The music WCDB plays, however diverse, is part of a music format. In order to do your show effectively, you need to know how the format works for your musical department. The formatics of WCDB have evolved over a long time and have been interpreted many different ways by many people over the years. Still, the basic concepts will be discussed. Remember, this is only a starting point. Your trainer, or the Music Director should give you their perspectives on the format. You will develop your own interpretation as a result of these many influences. You will also get regular feedback from the Program Director (for rock), Jazz Director, or Soule Director, on your execution of the format.

### **Basic Rock Formatics**

**Post and Hammock.** A basic aspect of the rock format is the concept of playing more familiar songs (posts) between less familiar ones (hammocks). The concept is so named because one may think of stringing up a series of hammocks between posts, which provide support. Generally, just try to alternate between more familiar songs and less familiar ones. What is judged as a familiar song is largely up to you. Within your show, you decide which are posts and which are hammocks. For this reason, one person's post may be another's hammock. Consult the Station Handbook for more information.

The idea behind post and hammock is that WCDB wants to feature new music not often played on the radio. Although it would be good to maximize this by playing almost all new songs, not as many people would want to listen to a station if all the songs were unfamiliar. On another level, WCDB has an enormous library spanning many years, and featuring important songs from the past is one more selling point on our format.

**Rotation vs. Library.** It is preferred that rock DJs play library (older music) and rotation (the newest songs that have arrived at the station) in a ratio of 1 to 1. Another way to explain this is that for every 12 song you play, six of them should be library and six should be rotation. Further, you should alternate between library and rotation every other song. Given the post and hammock idea mentioned above, this might suggest you would always play posts from the library and hammocks from rotation or vice versa. To circumvent this, just double up on a library or rotation type song between sets, or every couple of songs. As long as your whole show, looked at over the long term, contains 50% library and 50% rotation songs, you will be complying with the format.

**Heavy Medium Light Ratio.** Within the Rock rotation, songs are broken up into Heavies, Mediums, and Lights. All new songs are added as Lights, and move up to Mediums or Heavies as more people play them. Lights contain the most number of albums (usually more than 60). Mediums are the next largest group. Heavies are the Alternative Rock "hits," real popular albums with the DJs and listeners of WCDB. There are only a handful of albums in Heavy rotation. Some weeks, there are only two or three. Albums and CDs in rotation are color coded and lettered with H, M, and L to denote their status.

Within Rock rotation, you should play songs from rotation albums in a ratio as follows: For every Heavy, play two Mediums and three Lights. If you play 12 songs an hour total, and 50% should be rotation, that leaves six rotation songs. You can see how nicely this ratio will work out most of the time. At times where there are only a few Heavies, you can replace a Heavy with a Medium to avoid having the station play the same few CDs every hour. This is optional.

**Diversity diversity diversity.** WCDB DJs are encouraged to be as diverse as possible when choosing music to play on their show. Although each DJ has preferences in one musical area or another, all are strongly urged to pick songs from all genres to play on the air. Choose from core alternative, metal, folk, techno, old non-hit LP cut, world, rap, and reggae. Just about any style is fair game. Diversity is the key ingredient in WCDB's music recipe.

**Whiplash effects.** Taking the above diversity requirement one step further, you should randomly jump between musical styles for each song you play. Don't group two or more songs with the same style into a set. You should cause aural "whiplash" when moving between songs. The idea is that if there is a song in a style some given listener does not like, that listener will be more likely to stay tuned because chances are good that the next song will be in a different style, and one they may like. If you were to play four techno songs in a row, we would blow off anyone who hates techno for at least 20 minutes.

**Set length and Long Songs.** Normally speaking, sets should be four songs long. Sets can be shorter than this in order to get to certain items in the log on time. You should not normally play more than four songs without breaking for some announcements. This only applies for normal format shows which do not have an overriding format of their own.

This sets the stage for a discussion on song length. There are no hard rules for maximum song lengths that are permissible, but it is hoped that songs longer than nine minutes will not be played very often. If a song is eight minutes or longer, it should count as one song for every four minutes in length. Occasionally, bands release CDs with extremely long songs (the longest we've seen is 40 minutes). These are too long, even for "bathroom break songs." Try not to play long songs often.

### **Library Procedures [ALL DJs]**

**Rotation.** All vinyl and CD rotation is kept in Master Control. Rock 7" singles are put in plastic bags with 12 inch cardboard squares and kept with 12" vinyl records under the turntables. Each CD, album, or single has a label on it with that week's date on it. Each time you play a rotation song, you write your initials on this label. **DON'T WRITE THE DATE!** If you are playing a rotation song that is a request, then circle your initials. Also, use the label to see what rotation the DJ before you played by looking for his or her initials. You could also look at their playlist. Try not to repeat the bands, and especially the songs, the DJ before you played.

**Library.** You should arrive 30 minutes ahead of your show time in order to "pull" your library songs. Library CDs are kept in CD cabinets in the live studio. The CD cabinets can tip over if you open more than one drawer at a time. Considering the cabinets each weigh several hundred pounds, you don't want to tip them over. Library 7" singles are kept in a shelf in Master Control. In this shelf, as well as in the record library, for every record you select, also pull out the one just to the left of it a few inches and leave it like that. After your show, this will assist you in putting your records away. A total of 12 library items should be pulled for each two hour rock show. You may not get to all the items you pulled, but there's always your next show.

**Filing your records.** After your show, you MUST FILE YOUR RECORDS, CDs, and CARTS. If you don't, you will be suspended. You may have seen piles of records or CDs lying around the station, but rest assured the perpetrators have been dealt with. If there is some reason you must leave in a hurry and can't get to your filing right away, too bad. File them anyway. It takes five minutes. **No excuses.**

**The Alphabet.** When you re-file records in our library, you are single-handedly the one person on the planet that can most screw up the alphabetical order of the library. Don't haphazardly jam records



in next to records pulled out a few inches. Check the alphabet and file correctly! A library with no mis-filing is a pleasure to use. Everything we have is in a place you can find it. Everyone prospers.

There is a system to our filing. File by artist last name or group name, ignoring any leading "A" and "The." Bands whose names are numbers should be filed as if the number were spelled out. Within each band or artist name, ignore spaces in the name. This is not the same way a dictionary is alphabetized (by first word up to the space) or a computer (which treats the space as a letter lower than "A."

An example of our filing order follows:

STRANGE ARRANGEMENT	(treat as STRANGEARR...)
THE STRANGERS	(treat as STRANGERS)
A STRANGE YOUTHFUL GLOW	(treat as STRANGEYOU...)

Examples with numbers:

B-52's	(treat as BFIFTYTWO)
FRONT 242	(treat as FRONTTWOFOURTWO)

Finally, some bands use band names which sound like artist names but they aren't. These are alphabetized under the first "name" of the artist. Two common examples are Pablo Cruise and Lynyrd Skynyrd but these aren't good examples because WCDB doesn't play these bands. If you think of any better examples, we'll put them in the next training manual..

**Your Home Library.** Many of our DJs have large record and CD libraries at home. It is tempting to bring items from home to play on your show. Unfortunately, it is also against WCDB policy. WCDB has a music staff for listening to all the music we add. When DJs bring in their own music, they bypass that element of control. Further, it promotes fragmentation of the DJ shows when some DJs have access to libraries other DJs don't. Listeners who request songs they once heard on the station can't hear the songs again because the station doesn't own them. An exception can be made if a DJ owns a CD of an album that WCDB owns but that is scratchy or in otherwise poor condition. If you have a real rare gem of a song you want to play on your show, bring it in and we'll put it on cart so everyone can play it. (Don't do this yourself -- remember, carts have to be pre-cleared, and only the staff of the Production department can use the Production studio.)

**Taping CDs and Records.** WCDB provides a high quality cassette machine in the Live studio for the purposes of taping LPs, CDs, or DJ shows. While we do not encourage the violation of copyright law due to taping music from our library, we would much rather a CD or LP be taped than be stolen. Of course, if we conclusively determine any station member has taken any CD or LP from WCDB's library without explicit permission from the Music Director, whether or not there was any intention of returning it, that person will be suspended for life. Some individuals feel that stealing from a large State-owned University isn't really stealing. These people are jerks. The University couldn't care less what music we have in our library. When something is stolen, it hurts everyone. WCDB does not buy music, so things are not replaced. DJs who have strong preferences for particular CDs or bands can often get free copies from the music department. Make your preferences known.

This concludes Lesson 5.

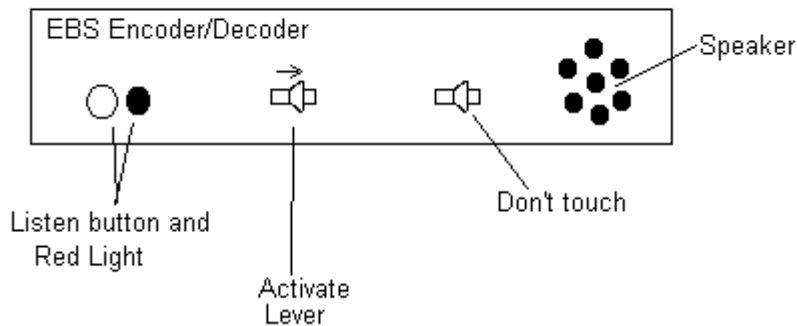
## Lesson 6. EBS and Logs

We continue your technical training with the last piece of equipment, followed by Logs and FCC Rules that apply to them.

### 3. EBS Monitor

The EBS Monitor is a way to send and receive tests of the Emergency Broadcast System. This is an FCC-imposed system of making sure that news of great importance can be broadcast immediately to the public at large. Like anything the FCC imposes, it is both a pain in the neck, and absolutely required at the expense of our station's license. So therefore, we cover it, and you learn it.

**Sending an EBS Test** Once per week at a random time, WCDB must schedule a test of the EBS to be sent out on our station. This involves airing a special announcement, playing a tone on the air for 22 seconds, and then making another announcement. No doubt you have heard this done on other radio stations. I bet you tuned out.



The EBS Monitor is used to create the tones when sending a test. The announcement parts are on a single cart. To send a test, play the first part of the cart. When the cart says "This is only a test," press the Activate lever to the right. (There is a metal protector guard on the lever which you must lift before the button will move.) When this lever is pushed, the tone will go

over the air for 22 seconds and stop automatically. When the tone stops, just play the second announcement from the same EBS cart. When the test is over, just continue with your show. Be sure to log the time you did the test on the cover of the program log. The inside of the log will tell you when you have to do the test, but the cover shows that it was really done. Write the time and your initials where it says EBS TEST SENT AT \_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_.

**NOTES:** You do not have to pot up anything to put the tones on the air. The Activate lever will override any audio on the air on WCDB and put tones on the air instead. Only press the lever during a test. The lever can also be pushed to the left to abort the test tones before the 22 seconds are up. Also, **you must be listening to Air**, as we recommend anyway, in order **to hear the tones**.

**Receiving EBS Tests** The way EBS is supposed to work is that we monitor other stations and still other stations monitor us. If there were an emergency, the station we monitor (WFLY-92) would notify us of the disaster, and we would be able to notify others. So every week when FLY-92 sends their EBS test, we have to prove that we got it. The EBS Monitor is a way to listen to FLY-92 and hear only when they do an EBS test (is there a better way to listen to FLY-92?) When they send the tones, this radio comes on and you hear the EBS test through the speaker. If this happens you will hear the radio turn on and you will hear the EBS tones they are sending, plus the announcement that it is (hopefully) a test. Assuming it is a test, you write down the time the test was received on the cover of the program log where it says EBS TEST RECEIVED VIA EBS MONITOR AT \_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_\_. The radio will continue to play, so to turn it off, press the Listen button. NOTE: If you are speaking on the air, the monitor will not come on until you

turn off the microphone. Of course, by then the EBS test may be over. If this happens, treat it like an EBS test since the monitor would never come on for any other reason.

**REAL EMERGENCIES** If you receive word of an Actual Emergency from FLY-92 (or from the AP Newswire which we'll mention in section 4), you must call the Station Manager, Program Director, and Chief Engineer. Each of these people must be notified. They will then let you know (after possibly conferring) if there is anything else you should do. They may ask you to sign off the air, especially if either you or they feel that you should evacuate the station. It seems unlikely that an emergency will occur that often that will seriously threaten life and property. Still, severe weather has been known to trigger real EBS broadcasts in our area. Don't belittle the purpose of the EBS system in light of new relations with the former Soviet Union nations.

**Testing the EBS Monitor** Since EBS is so important, the FCC requires that we check at least once per day to make sure the EBS Monitor works. To test it, press the listen button. If you hear FLY-92 in the speaker, it is working. If not, try the button again to be sure, then assume it is not working. This check is made by the first person to sign the log for any given day. Therefore, this usually happens every day at about 12:05 AM by whomever is on the air at that time. If the station was off the air prior to midnight, the first DJ on the next morning makes the test. The results of the test should be recorded on the cover of the program log. Circle whether the Monitor was Operational or Not Operational. Also, if it is broken, please leave a note for the Chief Engineer.

#### **4. Associated Press News Computer/Printer**

WCDB is an affiliate of the Associated Press News Wire service, which provides continuous teletype information to the station via phone line. The service feeds a computer program called AP NewsDesk, which runs on the station's IBM PS/2 computer. This computer is located in the news room and captures all news stories relevant to our area on the computer's hard disk. From the disk, news and sports casters can read, edit, and print news stories for their broadcasts. Also, local weather forecasts can be printed by any DJ who wants an updated forecast to read.

The reason you must know about the AP printer is because the AP is also a way WCDB can receive word of an EBS Alert or an EBS test. Just like the monitor for FLY-92, the DJ on duty must look for any printouts that relate to EBS. At 10 minutes before the top of any hour, the DJ must go into the news room and tear off any printed items from the printer. He or she must then scan them to be sure there is nothing about the EBS. If there are none, the DJ just puts the copy in a bin in the news room. Don't worry, not very much prints in a given hour. Clearing the printer each hour is also a way to keep too much paper from falling back behind the printer.

**EBS Messages** The AP will send an EBS test once each week. If you find an EBS message on the printer, you have to tear it off from the other stories that may have printed and bring the EBS printout into the studio with you. Then, check if you see the phrase "The authenticator word is..." somewhere on the paper. If not, or if you see "[authenticator]" then attach the printout to the program log with tape or a staple and log the time it came over the AP on the cover of the program log where it says EBS TEST RECEIVED VIA AP AT \_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_\_. The time it came over prints on the top of the message.

If there is an authenticator word (not just [authenticator]), there is also a response word. You have to look up both words on the EBS checklist to see if they match. The EBS checklist is a pink envelope on the bulletin board near the remote control. If the words match, no problem. Attach the printout to the log and put the time on the cover of the log as previously described. In over 15 years, the words have always matched. If for some reason they don't, call the Chief Engineer and advise him or her of the problem.

Figure 3. A SAMPLE EBS TEST PRINTOUT APPEARS ABOVE

The AP sometimes prints messages that say EBS ACTIVATION REQUESTED. This is not an EBS message and doesn't apply to this section on EBS tests. They are telling our local officials that they may want to activate a real EBS alert. The EBS tests you are looking for on the AP say EBS TEST somewhere on them, and print a row of x's across the page so you can spot them easily. If you get a printout that says EBS ACTIVATION REQUESTED, you can, at your discretion, read the announcement on the air if it concerns people in WCDB's listening area. (A severe thunderstorm warning for Saratoga County, for instance, does not concern our listeners). If you're not sure, CALL SOMEONE.

Remember, real emergencies can come over the AP too. Follow the directions as mentioned for the Real Emergencies from the EBS Monitor.

## **5. Taking Sports feeds over the Telephone [NEWS/SPORTS CLEARANCES ONLY]**

If you are training to be a DJ only, you may skip this section and go to Section 6 Program and Operating Logs.

When WCDB broadcasts a sports event, it transmits the broadcast to the station using a regular phone line. This signal is then put on the air. While this is happening, someone must be at the station to listen to what is on the air, and to insert promos and PSAs into the broadcast at certain times. All news and sports people must take their engineering clearance just like DJs, but they must also know how the phone feed system works.

When a sports broadcast is carried on WCDB, the sports commentators at the event will call the station using the phone/mixer equipment they brought with them. They should be instructed to call the station at 442-4244 (not 442-4242). If they don't call 4244, they can't be put on the air. The call should be made at least 30 minutes before the scheduled game start time.

To connect the phone with the console, go into the Production Studio and turn on the Phone Hybrid equipment located in the rack to the left of the console and above the cart and CD machines. There are two pieces of equipment, gray in color, that must be turned on using the power switches on the far right. Also at this time, make sure the two knobs marked "Equalization" are pointing straight up.

The phone in the production studio is often unplugged so that the ring does not disturb recording going on in there. Check the phone and plug it in if it is not connected.

On the console in Production, set pot 10 B, marked Phone, into Program, pot it up, and press the red On button for that channel. Press the Program button in the Monitor section to listen to Program. When you lift the phone receiver at this point, you should hear a dial tone in the speakers. If not, check your settings. Hang up the phone once you verify that the system is working.

When the commentators call in, the phone in Production will ring. Answer the call as usual, and tell the commentators to do a sample announcement for a minute as they would when the game is on. While they do this, set the console pot so that the Program meters show a normal level for the announcement. Assuming everything sounds normal, just arrange with the sportscasters how you will start the game, and then just leave the connection established until game time.

When you are not talking to the sportscasters, unplug the phone handset from the phone. To do this, pull out one end of the coiled phone cord from the phone or handset. If you don't do this, sounds from the Production Studio will be heard on the air when the game is on.

If no one is using Production, you can put the game on the air at game time by potting up Pot 12 in Master Control in Program and pressing the red On button. Once the game is on the air, no one must disturb the phone or Console in Production!

If you don't want to tie up the Production Studio, a patch cord can be used in the patch bay to connect Phone Out to MC 12A In. Then the Production console is no longer involved and can be used normally to do other things. Consult a Producer for instructions on Patch Bay use.

It is possible to send the programming of the station to the sportscasters over the phone line so that they can pick up their cues from the board operator at the station, or even converse with them on the air. If you want to do this, on the Production console pot up Channel 12 B (MC Audition) in Audition and press the red On button. In Master Control, press the Audition bus selector buttons on all channels of the console **except Pot 12**. Now, anything on the air will be heard by the sportscasters in their headphones, whether or not the sportscasters are on the air.

## **6. Program and Operating Log**

A log is a booklet that is used to record information about how the station is operated each day. There is a log booklet for each day WCDB broadcasts. As an operator of WCDB, every action you perform that relates to the transmitter, EBS equipment, or broadcasting certain announcements or features is recorded by you in that log. The log is your Bible, and you must comply with all log rules for the station to continue operating legally.

**Signing On and Off.** The log is kept on a clip board in Master Control, where it must remain at all times. When you start your show, you assume responsibility for the proper operation of the station. For this reason, you have to sign your name on the front page of that day's log, and put the time you signed in the Time column. Later, when you end your show, you sign your name again and put the time you went "off duty." While you are signed on the log, you may not leave the premises of the station (except to use the bathroom in an emergency). Always sign your real name, not your DJ name.

There are some people at WCDB who may tell you that you can sign your name twice at the start of your show, and just list the time you started, so that the next DJ can just fill in the time you left when

he or she comes in. **DON'T DO THIS. THIS IS AGAINST FCC RULES!** This used to be taught as correct procedure until we learned it was wrong. You have to sign the log at the start and end of your show, and you have to put the real time of day that you signed. It is all right to use the time the previous DJ ended as your start time as long as you were there at the time the DJ left.

OPERATOR SIGN-ON	TIME	OPERATOR SIGN-OFF	TIME

Figure 4. A FEW SAMPLE BLANKS FROM THE FRONT OF THE PROGRAM LOG.

Signing on the log is the very first and very last thing you should do during your show. Don't write in the log anywhere until you sign on. If you cannot find the log clipboard when you start your show, or **if there is no log** for the current date in the clipboard, you must **call or beep the Program Director** before you do anything else. Operating the station without a log is like driving a car without a license. Neither one is legal. The PD will tell you where the log can be found.

One more unusual but important thing about signing on the log: Since the log is for one day, a new log must be started at midnight every day the station is on the air. **At midnight**, the DJ on duty at that time has to **sign off the old log** using 12:00 midnight as their end time, and then **sign on the next day's log** using 12:00 midnight as their start time. As before, if there is no log for that day, call or beep the Program Director.

**Front Page.** In addition to the signature and time blanks on the front page, there are a few other blanks used for other purposes. When the transmitter is turned on or off, there needs to be an entry made next to "TRANSMITTER ON AT" or "TRANSMITTER OFF AT." Write the exact time you turned the transmitter on or off, and sign your initials there next to "BY:" There is an extra OFF blank for days when the station goes off the air before midnight. See **Signing On and Signing Off the Station** in Part 1 of the Training Manual for more information.

TRANSMITTER:
OFF AT:
DJ:
ON AT:
DJ:
OFF AT:
DJ:

<p style="text-align: right;">EBS DECODER checked as: _____ .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Operational] [Defective] at _____ by _____ .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">EBS TEST sent at _____ by _____ .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">EBS TEST received via A.P. at _____ by _____ .</p> <p style="text-align: right;">EBS TEST received via DECODER at _____ by _____ .</p>
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If you receive an EBS test, you put the time and your initials in either set of "EBS TEST RECEIVED" blanks, depending whether the test came from the EBS Decoder (FLY-92) or the AP printer. If you send an EBS test during your show, put the time you did the test and your initials where it says "EBS TEST SENT AT \_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_." This entry must be made as well as checking and initialing the Program Log entry that scheduled the test at that time. More on the Program log in a moment.

**Security Sheet.** After business hours, all people in the station must sign the security sheet and list the time they arrived and departed. The DJ on duty must enforce that everyone sign. Only WCDB members may be in the station after hours. DJs can't have guests unless they get permission from the

Station Manager, Program Director, or Chief Engineer. If that's the case, the guest's name will be on the sheet already, along with the initials of the person who gave permission. DJ Trainees are allowed in the station after hours if they are being trained at that time, or they have prior permission. Trainees must sign the security sheet too.

**Transmitter Readings Page.** There is a separate page that is used to record the transmitter readings when they are taken. There are four sets of blanks because readings are required four times a day whenever the station is on the air at those times. The times readings should be taken are 3:30 AM and PM and 9:30 AM and PM. When you see "Take Transmitter Readings" in the Program log, this is where you write them down. In the fifth lesson, earlier in this Training Manual, we described how to take transmitter readings. Note that the 3:30 and 9:30 times are only scheduled times. The actual time that you did take the readings needs to be written down in the ACTUAL TIME blank, and your full name should be printed in the DJ blank.

SCHEDULED TIME	ACTUAL TIME	DJ NAME (PRINT)	
<b>9:30 AM</b>			
CH 5 COLL. VOLTS	CH 6 COLL CURR.	CH 7 REV PWR %	CH 8 FWD PWR %

**Program Log.** The rest of the pages of the Log are where the items to be played for that day are scheduled. WCDB has a general hourly schedule of items that should be aired at certain times. For example, a legal ID must be done at the top of every hour, our Calendars and Club Beat should be done near the bottom of the hour, and the weather, PSAs, and carts to be played are usually scheduled in around 10, 20, or 45 minutes past the hour. There are also entries in the log for tasks that need to be done other than playing things on the air. For example, the log will have entries to remind you to lock the station door at 5 PM or to check the AP printer and remove any stories from it each hour at ten before the hour.

The items on the Program Log schedule are very general. The same photocopies of the log are used for all days we are on the air. Your show name will not be printed into the log, for example. Some hours do not follow the regular clock format either. This cannot be reflected in the log since it is so general.

<b>1:00 am</b>	<b>LEGAL ID</b>		
1:10 am	CART #		
1:25 am	CLUB BEAT & PROMO #		
1:45 am	WEATHER & PSA#		
1:50 am	<b>CLEAR AP</b>		

When you do your show, the log should set up a framework of how you set up the things you will play for that hour. For example, if you see you should play cart # Red 1 at 10 minutes past the hour, you might play two songs totaling 9 minutes, then plan on talking for a minute, then playing Cart 1 with a Red

Label from the rack. The next item on the log might be Club Beat at :30 past. So you can play songs until you get near the bottom of the hour, then read the Club Beat copy.

That last example is not necessarily how most DJs do shows on WCDB. The log is very general, so it can be viewed as reasonably flexible. You don't have to find songs of just the right length to make sure that first cart airs exactly at 10 past. That would be undue precision. That's why we say the log is a framework. Doing a DJ show is actually a very busy activity. You usually won't just be sitting there while the music plays. You'll be scanning the log to see what you are expected to play, and you should try to fit those items into your plans for the next 20 to 40 minutes.

Do you have to play everything listed? In a word, no. You should do major features like Calendars and Club Beat. You should play all the carts logged, although when you play them within that hour is pretty much up to you. You must do a legal station ID (more on this in a moment) between :58 and :02, within two minutes of the top of every hour. You must play the EBS Test when scheduled, and you should try to do it within 10 minutes of the scheduled time. Things like clearing the AP or locking the door must be done too, as near as possible to the time scheduled. These items are in **bold** print on the log. **All things in bold must be done, and if the time is bold too you must do it as close to the scheduled time as possible.** You can skip the weather, and you don't always have to get to every PSA. You don't have to do things in the log if they don't apply to your show, or if there is no such cart number, or if the item in question refers to a concert six weeks ago. Be intelligent, try your best, and you will do well with the log.

**Checks and Initials.** As you follow the log, you make a check mark and sign your initials next to each item you perform. **Be honest with the log.** If you don't do something on the air, don't check it. The log is not a tool to check up on you. We want it to document what really was broadcast.

## 7. FCC Rules

The F.C.C. (Federal Communications Commission) is not always a popular government agency with college radio stations, but they are a fact of life in the radio world. The FCC governs how all radio and television stations, among other entities, operate so that there is not chaos on the radio dial in this country. That means there are rules imposed on us that we must comply with if we wish to be able to transmit over the airwaves. The FCC is not very tolerant of lax rule enforcement, so unfortunately, neither are we. Violations usually lead to warnings and fines. Fines would not make the Administration of this college very happy with us. If they are not happy, we could all be surplus DJs to a faculty run station. So know the rules and follow them. The FCC can fine individual license holders, too!

This section will cover all the FCC rules you need to know to pass your Engineering Clearance. There are many more rules than this, but you don't need to know them. In fact, lawyers earn a handsome living interpreting all these rules.

**Legal ID** WCDB must broadcast, at the top of every hour, a legal station identification, usually called a legal ID. A legal ID consists of the letters "WCDB" followed by the word "Albany," with nothing in between. As long as that phrase is mentioned somehow at the top of every hour, we meet this requirement. WCDB asks you to make sure the legal ID is broadcast between :58 and :02, within two minutes of the top of the hour. Legal IDs may be said by you, or played from cart, but it must be clearly spoken. Distorted, weak, or misleading IDs are not considered legal. Any cart marked LEGAL may be played at the top of the hour to satisfy the Legal ID requirement. Some ID carts are done by recording artists, but not all of them are legal.



If you say the legal ID yourself, just work it into your speech naturally as part of the sentence. For example, "It's two o'clock and you're listening to WCDB Albany, the Only Alternative" is fine. If you are playing a song that won't finish until after :02 past the hour, **don't do the legal ID over the music.** Better to do it as soon as the song is over. The two-minute requirement is imposed by WCDB, not the FCC.

**Call to Action.** As a non commercial station, WCDB cannot air any material that can be considered a "commercial." As a test of what makes something a commercial, the FCC says that any announcement that includes a "call to action of the listener" with an intent to profit from it is a commercial, and thus is prohibited. Calling someone to action means telling them to go somewhere, buy something, or do something. If that action leads to a profit or sale by a business or individual, it cannot be said on the air on WCDB. Phrases like "go see this band," "buy this CD," as well as **mentioning the prices** of things is **prohibited on the air.** Nonprofit organizations are exempt from this rule, so if there is a concert or T-shirt sale sponsored by WCDB, we can announce ticket or shirt prices. Also, note that when we do concert announcements, we are **making statements of fact** of artists appearing at venues, but we are not calling anyone to action by telling them to go see these artists. This **is legal.**

**Announcement of Lottery.** For some reason, the FCC does not allow the promotion of any lottery, raffle, or game of chance, even for nonprofit organizations. In general, DJs cannot promote events they know about without submitting them to the Public Service director to be included on our Calendars. If you read the Calendar, you won't see any lottery announcements.

**Indecency, Obscenity, Profanity, and Safe Harbor.** This is a complex topic, but we'll try to keep it simple. Indecency is description of sexual or excretory activities or organs, in a manner that is offensive based on local community standards. Even description using everyday language may be indecent. Obscenity is material that appeals mostly to prurient interest (thoughts of desire or arousal), has no artistic or educational value, and violates community standards of good taste. Obscenities include, but are not limited to, Profanities, which are a select few "dirty words" most people are familiar with (and which appear in the WCDB Obscenity Policy in the Station Handbook). WCDB prohibits ANY MEMBER from making indecent, obscene, or profane announcements on the air. The FCC prohibits the broadcast of indecent or obscene material, or profanities on the air. The FCC does make an exception for indecent material only between 8:00 PM and 6:00 AM local time. This period of time is called **Safe Harbor**, since it is safe to air indecent material during this time. During Safe Harbor, songs containing indecent lyrics or profanities may be played. At other times, they may not. If you accidentally play such a song, you should simply segue to something else as soon as possible.

WCDB attempts to mark recordings with indecent lyrics with the phrase "Safe Harbor Only" or "S.H." when these songs are detected. DJs may also mark such records or CDs as they encounter them. Note that the word "safe" refers to "Safe Harbor," and not "safe to play any time."

As a new DJ, you will be asked to read WCDB's Obscenity Policy, and then sign a statement that you have read it and plan to abide by it. This is a condition of your being cleared.

**False, Misleading Communications.** No one may announce any false or misleading announcements about news events or events of civil distress. Don't make up news stories or warn listeners about fictitious threats to life or property. This is a serious offense, and could cost the station its license.

## **8. Final Details Required to Know to Pass Your Engineering Clearance**

**When to arrive before your show.** You should plan to arrive at the station at least 30 minutes in advance of your show. You need time to pull records and CDs and prepare. Repeated lateness will be dealt with.

**Leaving the station unattended.** If you are the DJ on the air, you should not leave the station unless absolutely necessary. Using the rest room would be a reasonable excuse, but not going to any other floor of the building for any other reason except to let in the next DJ at the front door of the Campus Center. If you must leave, and there is no station member in the station, you should see if the station keys are in Master Control. If they are, you should lock the station and take the keys with you. Otherwise, you must leave the station empty and unlocked. This is the least preferable way to leave the station. Do not plan to be away from the station for more than 90 seconds or so.

**Engineering Emergencies.** It is rare, but occasionally there are major failures of vital station equipment such as the console or the transmitter. If you are having a major difficulty operating the station, if there is unusual sound on the air, or if an FCC inspector shows up at the station, you must know how to contact the Chief Engineer. The pager company phone number is posted on the bulletin board in Master Control. Call this number, then ask to page #5014 (this number is on the board as well). Give them the message you wish to convey. Include your name and the phone number you want the engineer to call. You can also page the Program Director this way, by asking to page #5015. Stay close by to the phone.

**Fire Alarms and Building Evacuations.** The Campus Center does not require the DJ on the air to leave the building during routine fire drills, but it does require other station occupants to leave. If you have to leave the station for some emergency purpose, try if you have time to contact station management to get permission to sign the station off the air. Otherwise, during building or weather emergencies, you should sign off the station if you feel it is justified. Do not endanger yourself.

**How to Make CD Carts.** Your trainer will show you how to place a CD inside a CD cart permanently. You must know how to do this, since all DJs are asked, from time to time, to assist keeping our CD library in cart format.

This concludes lesson 6, as well as your training class series. Next week, classes will meet again only to review what you have learned. Your trainer will show you how to put all this information together to actually do a show on the station. You should attend this class if you can.

## **Your Engineering Clearance**

Your Engineering Clearance covers all the material from the front of this manual to this point. You are still responsible for all the things you needed to know to make your Demo tape too. The Engineering Clearance is not the same as a Demo Tape done in person with a member of the Engineering Department. It is a different test designed to assess your ability to operate the equipment, cope with on-air disasters including equipment failure and dead air, and explain properly all FCC and station rules and procedures. This sounds like a major task, but it's not as difficult as it seems.

Engineering Clearances are conducted in the Production Studio. Only you and a member of the WCDB Engineering staff will be in there. You will be told to pull some records and CDs from the library and to prepare to do a short sample program, right there live in the studio. Once you start the first song, you and the engineer will pretend you are now on the air on WCDB and that everything you do will be how you would do it on your own show. The show is not on the air, of course, nor is it being recorded. This show will continue until the engineer has seen enough to assess your skills as a DJ. The engineer

will also ask you to thread up, cue up, and play a reel to reel tape on the Otari tape deck. If you cannot do this, you will fail the Clearance.

When you take your Engineering Clearance, what is being tested is not only how to operate the equipment WCDB uses, but also how you will react when that equipment does not perform the way it is supposed to. Let's face it, equipment breaks down. Our DJs need to know how to deal with problems in Master Control (and elsewhere in the station) without, if possible, the listener even being aware that there is a problem. After all, it's not the listener's problem. During the Engineering Clearance, your appointed engineer will deliberately cause equipment to fail. Sometimes he or she will just tell you to pretend that a given piece of equipment is no longer working, while you are simulating a show in progress. Other times, the engineer will secretly kick the plug out of the wall of the tape machine, or do other similar acts that will make things go wrong during your clearance. If you're like most people, you probably are thinking right now that this is a mean and cruel thing to do to a nervous, prospective new DJ. This is not really the case. When equipment really fails, it does so without warning. Up until now, you have only dealt with equipment when it functions normally, like when you made your Demo Tape. We have to see how well you recover from unannounced equipment failures before they really happen to you.

This brings up a very important point. How you react to these problems can make a big difference in how the station will sound when these on-air problems really happen to you later on. When you take your Engineering Clearance, you don't want to be keeping an eye on your test administrator to make sure he or she doesn't mess with your equipment. It is better that you let the problems happen to you and just deal with them the best way you can. This will impress the engineer much more than forestalling a problem by being super-vigilant. Doesn't that make more sense? You must accept now that problems WILL happen to you during your Clearance. Just plan in advance how you will deal with most typical problems. Here's the best advice on how to handle just about any of them: Acknowledge, and Move On. When that turntable doesn't start, make sure you try starting it just one more time, but then quickly move on to another record, CD, cart, or announcement. Keep the amount of "dead air" to a minimum whenever possible. Don't just freeze in some mode where you will start this turntable if it's the last thing on Earth you do. Seconds of silence are ticking away, and, believe me, the engineer is counting them.

**Verbal Test.** Not only will you need to operate the studio by doing a simulated show, but you will also have to verbally answer some questions about FCC rules and WCDB policies. Your answers do not have to be too long, but they need to capture the essence of the correct answer. If you memorize answers and recite them, that's fine, but you do not have to do this. Just as long as you hit the major points of the answer.

Despite how imposing the Engineering Clearance may sound to you, you should know that we want you to pass. We need DJs just as much as you need a show. So it's in our best interests to help you know all you have to know. So here are some of the most common and most important questions you will need to answer on the verbal test. Since these are the most common questions, and since they are about such important rules and procedures, you must know the answers to all of these. The page numbers where the answers can be found are listed in case you need to look something up.

### **SAMPLE ENGINEERING TEST QUESTIONS** (Use the space provided to make notes if needed.)

There are two ways the station can receive an EBS Test. What are they? (p. 11, 12)

How do you send an EBS Test on WCDB? When should you do this? (p. 11)

How to you take transmitter readings? When is this done?

At midnight of any given day, several things must be done with respect to logs. What are they?

When should you expect to get to the station before your show? What if you will be late?

What do you do if the DJ on after you has not shown up yet and your show is ending?

What is meant by a Legal ID? When are these used on WCDB?

How do you sign on the station in the morning? How do you sign it off?

Explain, briefly, WCDB's Obscenity Policy. What is meant by Safe Harbor?

What would you do if you were playing a song during the afternoon that contained obscene lyrics?

What would you do if the transmitter readings seemed unusually high or low, compared to the others on the Transmitter page in the log? How do you know which readings are out of tolerance?

Can you play cassettes or other recordings from home on the air? Can you go into the Production Studio and put music or other material on cart to play on your show?

Explain briefly WCDB's Security Policy (station hours, guests, etc.). When can your guest speak on the air? When can you put phone callers on the air?

**Your appointment.** To take your Engineering Clearance, please MAKE SURE you know all the material required. We just gave you the sample questions, so you know what to expect. You may sign up for an appointment on the door of the Engineering Office. You can only take your Clearance when you make a prior appointment. Do not expect an engineer to let you take a clearance just because the engineer is at the station. Also, when you get your appointment for your Engineering Clearance, you should plan to keep it. If you are late or do not appear at all, you can expect your engineer to not be very happy. Unless you have a very, very good excuse (it's up to the engineer how good), you can expect to get another appointment somewhere around the year 2027.

Once you pass, the engineer will give you a number of forms to fill out. One of them will be an FCC license application (assuming you do not already have a license). The license we get for you will be valid at any other college radio station, and you can take it with you when you leave WCDB. If you want to work at a commercial station, you will need to pay a \$35 fee (that the FCC imposes, not us). Some people prefer to pay the fee to get the unrestricted license, but we suggest they just take our free one because if they do get a gig at a commercial station, often the station will kick in for the \$35. You will also be required to sign a copy of a statement that you have read, understood, and plan to abide by WCDB's Obscenity Policy. Make sure you read the policy before signing. If you do not sign this statement, we cannot give you a show. You must also leave your name and phone number for the Program Director so he or she can arrange a time for your On-Air Clearance.

Now that you've made it through the Engineering Clearance, you are almost an official Cleared DJ. As soon as you take (and pass) your On-Air Clearance, you can host any show or time slot on WCDB so long as you remain a student at SUNY Albany in at least one class. Between semesters and during holidays, you are cleared to do any fill-in shows whether or not you take classes. This privilege extends to all WCDB Alumni, provided that they adhere to all current station and FCC rules and regulations.

**Oops.** If, for some reason, you do not pass your Engineering Clearance the first time, do not worry. You can make a new appointment and brush up on what you need to improve upon before you take it a second time. Sometimes, depending on what went wrong, the engineer may only require you to repeat only the steps that need improvement, and you do not have to repeat the entire clearance. This is up to the engineer, however. You can take your Engineering Clearance as many times as you need to. Hang in there. You will pass, and you will get that show, hopefully before graduation.

### **Advanced Tips for Doing Your Show**

You will not be tested on the following, although you should refer to these items to enhance your show and the station in general. It is suggested that you do learn these things, but after you begin doing shows on WCDB.

**Artist IDs and Sounders.** Musicians record IDs for the station when they visit or are interviewed. We also get custom IDs from record companies. These IDs are put on cart and are kept in Master Control. The carts group IDs by artist name. Some IDs are legal and some are not. Legal and nonlegal ID carts exist for each letter of the alphabet. These carts are labeled "LI" and "NI," respectively, along with the letter of the alphabet. Most carts have more than one ID on them, so you need to play the cart in cue to find the one you want to play. The artist names, running times, and outcues are on a label on the top of the cart. Also, whether the ID is musical or spoken is indicated. Musical IDs should be played between songs, while spoken ones can be played during intro or fade out of a song. It is suggested that you play an artist ID when you play a song by that artist. You can also play an artist ID if that artist is now in another band or works solo and you play that band. Legal artist IDs can be played at the top of the hour or at any other time, and nonlegal IDs can only be played at other times.

**Copy Book.** The PSAs, promos, sign-on and sign-off copy, Club Beat, and the various Calendars are stored in a three ring binder above the console in Master Control. When you need any piece of copy, check this book. Copy in this book needs to be cleared by the Program Director before being aired, so do not add any items of your own. In addition, the back of the book contains relevant technical data and instructions you may need to refer to.

**Newscasts/Sportscasts.** Certain hours of the day or night are led off by news and sportscasts at the top of the hour. Sometimes there is both news and sports, and sometimes only one or the other. There are two carted "sounders" which lead off news and sports. When there is a newscast, the person who will do the cast will let you know whether they wish to lead with headlines or just have you start the sounder. In either case, put the News mic channel on and put it up to put the newscaster on the air, either before or after the sounder, as needed. If there is sports too, play the sports music at the agreed-upon moment and then put on the sports mic.

**Talkback.** If you wish to speak with someone in the news booth, press the red Talkback button on the console and speak into the on-air microphone. To hear them, put the news or sports mic in cue.

**Effects of Compression.** Early in the first training manual, we mentioned compression equipment WCDB uses to even out the level variations between or during items we broadcast. This equipment creates an on-air slickness that makes the station sound good regardless of how levels are run on the console. Everyone who listens to WCDB (or any other station for that matter) hears the effects of compression, but few people are ever aware of it. Without compression, soft songs would sound soft on the radio and everyone would turn up their volume, and then a louder song later on would be jarring and irritating to the listener.

The reason why we mention this is so that you can make compression work for you during your show. When songs fade out, compression brings up the volume of the station to compensate. As it brings up the volume, it also brings up the level of tape hiss, record scratches, or other recording flaws. Try not to let songs fade out too far before starting the next one. In the case of records, a soft part of the song makes the compression turn up the volume so that bangs on the furniture or even the sound of the monitors are picked up by the stylus and sent over the air. When the monitors are picked up by the turntables, it creates a low feedback that sounds like a long tugboat horn. This sound is on the air. To avoid this, turn down the speaker volume during soft parts of records.

Finally, compression makes segues more seamless. As a song ends, the compression brings up the sound until the next song starts. When the next song starts at full volume, the compression instantly turns itself down so the new song is exactly as loud as the old one. By turning down, it also instantly makes the old song practically inaudible on the air. When you do segues, you should listen for this effect. With time and practice you can make your segues even better by anticipating how the compression will react. Finally, remember to use the Program meters on the console when judging how a song is ending. **Compression will not allow you to hear the fade on the speakers until it's too late to do a good segue.** Watch the meters and when you see them dropping, you should go to your next item.

**Monitor Speaker volume.** The speakers in Master Control are capable of playing very loud. Just because they can play loud doesn't mean you have to play them loud. First of all, protect your hearing. Continuous loud music can have long term detrimental effects on your hearing. This goes for loud headphones too. Hearing loss is permanent. Be smart with your ears.

Don't play the speakers loud when cueing up records. Dropping the stylus on a record when the monitors are set high takes its toll on the long term health of the speakers. If the speakers burn out or break, the station may not replace them for a long time. Everyone will suffer with bad speakers. If the station has to buy new speakers, you can bet that the maximum speaker volume will be electronically reduced to prevent future problems.

In the previous section we mentioned that loud speaker volume can leak into the turntables and cause on-air feedback. This makes the station sound very unprofessional. If you hear the low feedback tone, turn the volume of the speakers down.

In addition, loud speaker volume can be disturbing to others in the station and in the building. The studio is above a study lounge. Others may be recording or may be listening to music in other parts of the station. Be considerate of others, and expect them to be considerate of you.

### **Coping with On-Air Disasters (But Not the EBS Kind)**

**Dead air.** Long term silence on the air is the station's enemy. This should be avoided at all reasonable cost. Always have an emergency song, cart, or item ready to play just in case a planned song or tape does not play correctly. If you find yourself with dead air, don't panic. Just reach for the first reasonable cart you can find and play it. Carts are preferred to CDs or records since they can start up the moment they are put into the machine. You can also put on the mic and speak to avoid dead air, but then you have to find something else to play while speaking, which can be a problem.

**Records on the wrong speed.** If you start a record on the air and then realize it's on the wrong speed, you have two options. One is to pot the record down, fix the speed, and then pot it right back up. The other is to just hit the correct turntable speed button without potting down. Either one is fine.

**Skipping Records or CDs.** If a record skips in a repeating fashion (so that it will repeat that section of groove forever), you should pot down the record, lift the stylus and place it down a few spirals further into the record, then pot back up. You can also abort the record and go to another song, depending on how long the record has been playing or how long it has left to play.

If a record skips forward once or twice, this can be dismissed as a minor annoyance. If a record skips three or more times, you should segue to another song and not play the song that skips. Make sure the stylus of the turntable is clean. If the turntable has been playing other records fine that day, you can assume the record is causing the skips. You could write "skips" on the record label next to the song name if you would like to warn future DJs who may choose that song.

For a CD that skips into a locked repeat, get it off the air as soon as possible. Nothing sounds worse than a locked groove CD skip, except certain Yoko Ono records. Go to another song. If a CD skips forward at all, it can be a sign that the CD player needs a cleaning. See if other CDs skip in that machine, and leave a note for the engineer if you find a skipping trend. A CD that skips once is also likely to skip again. Be ready to go to another song, as CDs have been known to skip over several minutes worth of a song at a time.

**Bad Stylus (you might call it a needle).** If many records skip on a certain turntable, it can be safely assumed the stylus needs to be replaced. Call an engineer in this case. They will advise you on what to do.

**Uncued Carts.** When carts are stopped during play or before they have re-cued, and then replaced into the cart rack, the next person to play the cart will have no way of knowing this condition. The next time the cart airs, the cart will either play silence, or play from some midpoint of the cut to the end. If a cart you need to play doesn't play, go to something else. Hit Fast Forward on the cart machine to see if the cart just needs to be re-cued. If you play a cart and it begins play from the middle, go to another item and fast forward this cart so it can be played later on. Don't go on microphone and attempt to stall while a cart re-cues. Some carts take a long time to re-cue. The less you have to say, the longer the cart takes to re-cue, it seems. Also, don't talk about technical problems like this on the air. No one cares what a cart is. Try to go on as if there is no problem.

**Are We Off The Air?** There may come a time when you think you are playing something on the air but you cannot hear anything from the monitors to confirm it. You may also get calls from listeners alleging that you are off the air. If this happens, don't panic, and use your head.

First of all, common sense will tell you that if there is no sound on the air, maybe nothing is playing in the console. Check the Program meters to see if they are moving. If they are not, make sure what you are playing is in Program. Also, try other sources. If you cannot get any levels on the Program meter from any source, then the console is at fault. You should page the Chief Engineer immediately.

If one listener suggests you might be off the air, you may or may not have a problem. If you get a series of calls all saying you're off the air, they may be onto something. **The important thing to determine is whether the station really is off the air or just having a problem hearing itself.**

Wherever you listen to "Air" or "Tuner" in the station, all these signals come from the same FM tuner in the Engineering office. If that tuner fails, or mutes because the antenna fails, you will not hear the Air sound in any room of the station. If this happens, you should check the transmitter remote control to see if position 8 shows a reading between 90.0 and 104.0. If so, then the transmitter is on. The next thing to do is see if sound is being heard on the station. However, if the readings are way off or near zero,

first try restarting the transmitter by going to channel 5 and pressing the Up arrow. If this doesn't solve the problem, page the Chief Engineer immediately.

To see if sound is being heard on the station, call someone you know with a radio and ask them to tune in the station. Of course, this person has to live within WCDB's coverage area, so don't call your friend in Montana. If others can hear your show on the radio, you can assume the problem is with WCDB's tuner. Try listening to Program in the console to see if you can get by like that until the engineer can fix the problem. If it's a reasonable hour, call the engineer, or otherwise wait until morning.

If your friend cannot hear the station but the transmitter readings look okay, there is a problem getting audio to the transmitter. Page the Chief Engineer immediately.

## **Odds and Ends**

**The Doorbell/Intercom Strobe light.** The doorbell button outside the station door rings an intercom in Master Control. This intercom does not beep when the microphone is on. To let the DJ know when someone is at the door even when the mic is on, there is a yellow strobe light in the live studio that can be seen by either Master Control or Production. If this light flashes, answer the door.

**Taping your show.** Many DJs like to tape their show. Hearing your show after the fact can be rewarding if you enjoyed your musical selection. It can also help you improve your show since you hear your show just like our listeners do and can hence critique it. You can tape your show in a cassette deck in Master Control. This tape deck is located about 12" off the floor at the end of the counter with other rack mounted equipment. This cassette deck only records and does not play anywhere. The machine is connected to Air, so your tape will be the slicker, compressed version the listeners hear.

You can also tape your show in the live studio. The stereo amplifier does not need to be turned on to do this. If it is turned on but someone else is using it to listen to records or CDs, you can still tape your show here. In either case, just set the Record Selector to Tuner and turn on the cassette deck. Only one deck of the dual deck machine records, so put your tape in that well. Press and hold Record and press Play. Once the tape begins moving, you can set the autoreverse switch to the position that looks like a sideways "U" shape. This will then record both sides of the tape and then stop. You will not have to flip the tape over if you set this switch correctly.

**Telephone Etiquette.** When people call on the phone, you should be reasonably courteous to them. If the caller complains, remember that they are entitled to their opinion. Don't attack them. If anyone becomes abusive to you, you should probably just hang up after a sarcastic "Thanks for calling." The **worst** thing you can possibly do is refer to that caller on the air later on. No matter how mad a caller makes you, don't mention them on air. If you do, they have won. Some callers like to shake up DJs. Their goal is to affect you and your show. Don't let them win.

**Requests.** The number to announce on the air is 442-4242. This is the only station number you should ever announce for any reason unless you are reading some copy with another number. When someone requests something, if it's something you think the station can play, fine. If not, try to clarify what the format of the station is and let them try another artist or song. Some callers make requests without first listening to the station to see what format we're currently playing. If you get a request not in your format, tell them so, and tell them when the format will again be on WCDB so they can try again later.

**Giveaways and Contests.** Once per show, DJs should check the giveaway book to see if any contests are scheduled for their show. If there are, you may do them anytime during your show. If there



are times listed that already happened but no winner is listed next to them, you may also do those contests.

When you have a giveaway to do, you can pre-announce that later you will be giving away whatever it is you have. This will keep people tuned in. When the time comes, you read the copy on the giveaway sheet, and then announce what number caller you are accepting, and the phone number (442-4242). Always make the rules clear regarding how many items can be won and what number caller (e.g. one pair of tickets to caller three). For really desirable items, you can also attach some other criterion to winning, such as answering a trivia question (but not too tough a question) or mentioning at least one song you played that day, etc.

When calls come into the station, the four lines we have stack the calls up. After someone calls 442-4242, the next person who dials 442-4242 will ring in on 4243. The next caller will ring in on 4244. The fourth caller will ring in on 5158. This assumes all lower numbered lines are still ringing or on hold. If you ask for caller five, you should answer the first four calls, telling each caller what number they are so they can try again. The fifth caller will only get through if one of the four lines is free.

When the winning caller is reached, write their name and phone number on the giveaway sheet next to the day and time you gave them away. Check the bottom of the sheet and tell the caller anything listed under the "Tell Winners" column. That's it. You don't have to tell the later callers that you already have a winner unless you want to.

Only approved contests can be done on WCDB. Giveaways not listed in the book are not permitted.

**Absence from Your Show.** Once you are given a show on WCDB, you are responsible for doing it every week (or however often it is on). If you are unable to do your show (or any part of it), even because you have been suspended, **you are responsible for finding a DJ to cover the shift.** The best thing to do is to **call the Program Director and advise them** you will not be doing your show and that you will begin looking for a replacement. Then, you begin your search. The station has phone number lists so you can call all DJs in your format and ask them if they can do your show. Sometimes you can trade with someone and do their show at another time. This is no problem. If you cannot locate someone to cover your show, you should call the Program Director and let them know. Do not expect the Program Director to find a replacement DJ for you. Ultimately it is your responsibility. When you find a replacement DJ, you or they should let the Program Director know as a courtesy, assuming it is not in the middle of the night.

If you do not show up (and on time) for your show and haven't arranged for someone to cover it, you can expect to be suspended for two weeks. During your suspension, you must still cover your show. If you make arrangements to have someone fill in and then they do not show up, they are responsible. For this reason, if you agree to do a show for someone, then the shift becomes your responsibility.

**Specialty Shows.** If you want to propose a special format or type of show to do on WCDB, you may propose it to station management only after you have been a cleared WCDB DJ for six months or more. Consult the Station Handbook for details on Specialty Shows.

**Taxi Fare Reimbursement.** If you take a taxi home from the station after dark, you can get reimbursed for taxi fare. To do this, you have to get a receipt and submit it to the Business Director. The tip cannot be reimbursed; only the fare. Reimbursement may take a few weeks.

**How to get in if the Campus Center is locked.** If the Campus Center building doors are locked and you need to get in to do your show, you should call the DJ on the air and tell them to come down and

open the door for you. If you want to spend a quarter on this call, that's up to you, but you won't be reimbursed. The other option is to make a collect call to the DJ on the air (use 442-4242 or 442-5158 if you don't get an answer on 4242). Dial 0, then 442-4242 (or 5158). A recording will say to press "11" to call collect. Then, at the tone, say your name and that you're outside. You only have two seconds or so to record, so be quick. Then the call will ring through and the DJ will hear your name. As a rule, no one can accept collect calls at the station, so the DJ will refuse the charges. That doesn't mean they won't come down to let you in. Be patient. Sometimes you will call just before the DJ has a long announcement to make, or has to wait for an ending song to finish before he or she can leave their post.

**How to Print the Weather forecast.** In the news room, the AP NewsDesk program captures weather reports that can be printed at any time. To print the latest weather, first press the computer space bar to de-activate the screen saver. From the NewsDesk menu, use the arrow keys to choose the leftmost menu and press Enter. Then choose the Weather option and press Enter. From the weather menu, choose State/Zone Forecasts. When the list appears, the topmost Zone Forecast on the list is the most recent forecast that has come in. To print it, choose this item and press Enter. When it displays, you need to find the Capital District forecast from the entire forecast. Use the up/down arrows until the forecast appears on the screen.

With the forecast on screen, move the cursor to just above the part you want to print. Press the F5 key, then press the down arrow until the whole forecast is highlighted. Then press F8. When it asks "Print Highlight?" press Enter to choose Yes. The printer will then print the weather. You should also check the latest Albany temperature from the H-Temps item in the Weather menu. You don't have to print this on the printer. You can just read it on screen and write it on the printout yourself.

**Kenny Michaels.** Kenny is a long-time listener of WCDB that seems to call every DJ on the station at least once per week. The only reason we mention him here is that he calls so often and likes to talk a long time about all college radio stations in our area. He has a very distinctive voice, much like a cross between Yoda from Star Wars and Gonzo from the Muppets. Kenny is a nice guy, but he doesn't seem to have normal memory capacity. He will ask you the same questions every week and will not seem to remember what you tell him. We hope you treat Kenny well, but be advised that he does like to call everyone often, and you are not expected to always talk to him. If you don't want to talk, just tell him you don't have time to talk and hang up.

////END////

**About the Author.** Joe Schepis began working in radio when he, at the age of 13, built a station in his home transmitting Top 40 music and goofy tapes to the four corners of his property line. Over the next 11 years, this pirate station grew in sophistication and listenership until Joe decided he needed a life. In 1983, Joe went to SUNY in Utica, where he founded WCOT-FM there. His professional career began at WBAB and continued at WGSM/WMJC, both on Long Island. In 1991, Joe came to SUNY Albany and joined WCDB, and since joining has served as Production Director and Training Coordinator. When he's not cleaning up in Master Control and extolling the Virtues of Compression, he likes to play 1980's music on his show, *Retrotations*. Joe plans to get a real job as soon as his carpal-tunnel syndrome clears up, having written 53 pages of Training Manual.

**About the Computer.** Microsoft Word for Windows, Version 2 was used to create this document. Illustrations were done using Windows Paint. A Canon BJ-300 Bubble Jet printer created the hard copy.