

WAMH DJ Manual

Eighteenth Revision, January 2016
The Executive Board of WAMH Amherst College Radio

It is WAMH's policy to provide equal opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, political affiliations and/or beliefs, class, Veteran status or sex in personnel actions including recruitment, evaluation, selection, promotion, compensation, training and termination. WAMH will not tolerate any acts of hazing and anyone found practicing hazing will be reported to the proper disciplinary channels.

WAMH Programming

Mission Statement:

It is WAMH's purpose, as a non-commercial radio station, to provide a listening alternative to Amherst College, the surrounding community, and those that listen to WAMH using our webcast.

Most of WAMH's programming consists of two hour music shows, but we would like to integrate thoughtful, original, coherent talk, news and sports programming. WAMH also fulfills its duties as a non-commercial radio station by having DJs read bi-hourly Public Service Announcements. PSAs are mostly geared towards publicizing Amherst College, five college, and local events, as well as national and international non-profit entities. It is our goal to offer the Amherst College community and our listeners programming that is original, appealing, and diverse. We aim to create an atmosphere of professionalism and garner high esteem amongst our listeners, but also have programs to which people genuinely enjoy listening.

One of the main ways we ensure original programming is to play lots of new music. New music is defined as music released in the past three months. Every general music show on WAMH that does not possess a unique theme has a new music requirement of 25%. Only with special permission from the Programming Director may you be excused from this requirement.

Non-Music programming includes news, sports, live bands, and talk shows. All of these types of shows require special arrangements with the Program Director, to ensure that we are offering special programming that is professional, coherent, and comports with WAMH's programming goals.

Getting into the Station:

Only trained DJs and their guests are allowed entrance to the station. Do not let anyone into the station that is not on the DJ list. Feel free to check IDs before opening the door.

The radio station is located on the second floor of the Keefe Campus Center. The Campus Center is open every day during the school year, with the exception of breaks. If the Campus Center is open when you come to do your show, go upstairs and to the front door of the station, knock, and the DJ whose show precedes yours will let you in. If, for some reason, a DJ does not answer the door, go downstairs and call the request line (x2288) because the DJ might not have heard you. If no one answers, tell the building manager that you are a DJ and ask to be let into the station.

If your show begins as Keefe closes for the night, please get to the Campus Center at least 10 minutes prior to closing so that the Building Manager can sign you in before s/he locks up the campus center for the evening.

If your show starts while the Campus Center is closed (check the Campus Center website for hours), arrange in advance to have Campus Police let you into the building, or sign out a key to both the campus center and the station (you will have to sign a list at security and bring your student ID). Once your show is over, you must return the keys immediately to campus police.

If you ever have any trouble getting into the station to do your show, get in touch with e-board members in the following order: Executive Director, Program Director, General Manager. The station is often closed during breaks. To get into the station during this period of informal programming, please contact an e-board member.

The Log:

It cannot be overemphasized that correctly keeping logs is your most important responsibility, as they are the only permanent records of what goes on at WAMH. They are what the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) checks when license renewal time comes around. If logs are not constantly in good shape, we could lose our license. Also, always use an ink pen and use legible handwriting. Cross out any errors with a single line, initial the mistake, and write the correct entry.

1) Operator on/off: Write the date at the top of the page and sign in and out of the log using your full name and correct time next to the appropriate time slot. If for some reason the log is not at the correct time slot, flip forward until the next available correct time slot appears. Do not leave any time between shows unaccounted for.

2) Station Identifications (SID's): Without exception, you must announce the station's call letters and location within 5 minutes of the hour. Appropriate SIDs are: "WAMH-Amherst," "WAMH in Amherst" Or "WAMH 89.3 FM in Amherst" You cannot say any other words between the call letters and the location. For instance, "This is WAMH jamming in Amherst" is not a legal SID. When you've done the SID, you must log the time you did it in the time column on the SID row. Log only the mandatory, hourly SID's. In general, you should do SID's often because they reinforce our call letters in the listeners' minds, fostering audience identification.

3) Public Service Announcements (PSA's): Perhaps the most important way WAMH fulfills its FCC obligation to serve the public interest is by airing PSA's on the :20 and :40 of every hour. PSA's can either be played off of CDs, read from notices kept in a box in MCR (mostly Amherst College and local events), or taken from world news blurbs. When you've aired a PSA, you must note so in the log, writing the exact time aired and the title.

4) X-Plugs (Cross Plugs): If you plug another WAMH program (which we encourage you to do!) be sure to note so in the log under the comments section.

5) Transmitter Readings: You must take three types of transmitter readings each hour, within 5 minutes of the hour. The three meter readings are Volts, Amps, and %Power. Because the transmitter is located on a mountaintop several miles from campus, you take the readings by calling our remote control unit at the transmitter. The instructions to do so are posted in the studio.

a) Power: If the meter reading for power is lower than 97% or above 103% you will have to raise or lower the power. These actions should be noted in the log, along with the newly corrected power.

b) Alarms: When the transmitter answers the phone, a voice will usually say "alarms are clear." If, however, there is an alarm or a warning, note in the comment book and, if it seems urgent, contact an e-board member or the Chief Engineer.

6) Turning the station on/off: Whenever you turn the transmitter on or off, you must log that action, because doing so affects the broadcast signal on our frequency. When you read the station sign-off address, write the time and the words “Program off@”. Then when you turn off the signal write the time and “Carrier off @”.

7) Emergency Alert System: You must note any broadcast of the EAS in the log as “EAS test received @ ...” and then as “EAS test aired @...”

8) Comments: The Comments notebook should be used to note any other incidents that you feel should be recorded, like equipment breaking (in which case you should also call the Chief Engineer) or an irate listener calling and threatening to bomb the station, etc -- basically anything you deem important for an e-board member or other DJs to know. This is also the space to note any good things you might want the rest of the WAMH community to know about (including positive responses from callers), comments on new music we have (or don't have), etc.

The Playlist:

The playlist serves three main purposes. First, it keeps track of the songs that you play so that you can tell your audience what they've been listening to. Secondly, it tells the Program Director and the Music Directors a) what kind of music your show is airing and b) that you're fulfilling the new music requirement. Last, but not least, it helps the Music Directors to compile charts of our most frequently-played albums for our reports to the College Music Journal, which ensures that we keep getting sent new music. Please complete a playlist for each show you complete.

To access the Playlist go to wamh.amherst.edu and select the "For DJs" tab. The website should redirect you to a new page that is titled "WAMH Playlist". At the beginning of your show, please fill in your Show Title in the space allotted. When you play a song, please use the corresponding text boxes to indicate what Artist, Song and media type you played. Additionally, please indicate if the song was new or a request by checking the appropriate boxes. Once you are finished with your show, please click the "Submit Form" button at the bottom of the page.

Important Procedures:

1) Switching between WAMH and NEPR:

- If there is no show before yours or there is no show after you, or both, you will need to switch the frequency between NEPR and WAMH. This is very important as it switches the signal coming from our tower and Mixlr between NEPR and WAMH programming. If you forget to do this you will not be broadcasting over the airwaves OR online, and if you switch at an improper time you will interrupt NEPR programming and confuse listeners.

a. If there is no show before yours, you will need to change the frequency from NEPR to WAMH. Use the small programming box to the left of the large mixing board by pressing the round, black button that says “WAMH.”

- i. Check to see which programming is being broadcast by switching the mixing board’s source to “air” on the right, above the headphone jack. Listen in on headphones or over the speaker to make sure you are on the correct program setting.

b. It is imperative that switching is done as close to the top of the hour as possible in order to seamlessly transition between programming and keep listeners engaged. Try your best to arrive a few minutes early and use the large red digital clock to press the button as close to the top of the hour as possible.

c. If you miss the top of the hour by more than a couple of seconds, stop and wait to switch at the top of the next hour. Do not switch in the middle of the hour, this abruptly cuts off NEPR programming and confuses listeners.

e. If there is no show after yours, you will need to change the frequency from WAMH to NEPR. Use the small programming box to the left of the large mixing board by pressing the round, black button that says “NEPR.” Again, proper timing is essential.

- i. Check to see which programming is being broadcast by switching the mixing board’s source to “air” on the right, above the headphone jack. Listen in on headphones or over the speaker to make sure you are on the correct program setting.

2) Taking Meter Readings

- Remember, you have to take readings at the top of each hour during your broadcast.

a. Start by dialing 9-253-7874

b. Wait for greeting asking for access code.

c. Enter 8451

- i. Controller will beep twice and respond, “Access accepted”.

d. Dial 2

- i. Controller will respond, “Output power [~146 Watts]”.
 1. If power is between 138 and 153, continue to step f.
 2. If the power is <138, press #. The controller will respond, “Two raise”.
 3. If the power is >153, press *. The controller will respond, “Two lower”.
 - a. If 2 does not raise the level to 138-153 after 5 adjustments, inform WAMH and move on to step e.
 - b. If 3 does not lower the level to 138-153 after 5 adjustments, turn WAMH off [**refer to ____**]

e. Dial 3

- i. Controller will respond, “Final voltage [~29.0 volts]”.

f. Log the value

g. Dial 4

- i. Controller will respond, “Final current [~6.36 amps]”.

h. Log the value

i. Dial 920 to end the call.

- i. Controller will respond with one beep.

j. Hang up.

NOTE: Don't worry about memorizing the readings procedure. All of these instructions are posted above the window in the studio.

a. Many of our listeners tune in via the web stream. If you are the first show of the day, you may need to turn on the web stream.

b. In order to do so, you must use the Mac processor in the Studio and open the Mixlr application.

c. Once you open the application you must select the type of the broadcast and click “Start Broadcast.”

- i. Do not change the title of the broadcast to the name of your show unless you make sure to switch it back to “WAMH Radio” at the end of your show.

Controlling Broadcast Levels Properly

The levels or the volume at which you broadcast are very important. You control your broadcast volumes by using the sliding bars on the main operation board. Each bar or knob is labeled with a corresponding output. By monitoring the audition, program and tel/mono output scales on the top of the operation board, you can see at what volume you are broadcasting. It is important that when you are talking or playing music that the needles on these scales be moving, but not into the red colored area. If your needles register in this area, it is called over-modulation and your sound will be distorted. Similarly, it is important that you make sure your needles are moving, or else no sound will be emitted. Please adjust your volumes slowly and appropriately in order to protect the station equipment and your listeners' ears.

Please be aware of songs that begin quietly and get louder and adjust the controls appropriately. Always change the volume gradually or the music will have a blurred sound. When you are on the microphone, the volume should be set at the level best for you, so discover what is right for you and keep the volume at that level each time. A word of caution: be wary of playing around too much with the volumes during a song or PSA, since volume changes are highly noticeable. Keeping the meters out of the red, however, is vital.

Using the Telephone

To answer a call:

1. WE LOVE CALLERS. The WAMH request line is (413)–542–2288.
2. Pick up the phone
3. Hit the flashing green button
4. Introduce yourself
5. If you want to put them on hold, hit green button. It should then flash yellow. You can set down the phone or hang it up; the phone call will not drop. Hit the flashing yellow button to take off hold.
6. Hang up while on solid green light or hit red “Drop” button to end call.

Put phone call on air:

1. Put monitor attached headphones on.
2. Hit second button on line 1. It should flash red.
3. Switch “On” on “Telephone” on monitor board. After Steps 2 and 3, the phone call should be on air and the program needles should move as the person on the line speaks.
4. Make sure “Mic 1” is switched on.
5. Make sure “PGM” and “TEL” are on for “Mic 1”.
6. Make sure “PGM” and NOT “TEL” is on for “Telephone”. If TEL is on the person on the line will hear what he or she says on air, and this creates an awkward loop.
7. Talk normally into microphone and hear your caller with the headphones.
8. Hit the red “Drop” button on the phone machine to end the call.

Note: This procedure is also posted in the studio.

If anyone calls for WAMH business, please direct them to the WAMH business line, 413-542-2224.

Remember to give out the telephone number every 20 minutes or so, but do not beg for calls. Please be courteous and friendly with all callers. Play requests if at all possible, but remember-- it's your show; if you're playing Young Thug and someone requests Coldplay, you do not have to play it. Politely explain that it doesn't fit in with what you're playing right now, but if you can work it in later, you will. Also, dedications and shout-outs are strictly prohibited, as they sound unprofessional.

Playing Records

If you would like to play vinyl on your show, please ask the program director for specific instructions in how to do so.

Equipment Breaks

Please be gentle with all WAMH equipment. There is a lot in the radio station that can break. Replacing all of it can get quite expensive. If you recklessly break something, you will be held accountable for repair costs. We also understand that things can break from general wear and tear. If something stops working during your show, please write it in the comment book. If the broken equipment prevents you from doing your show (i.e.: the microphones stop working) please call the Chief Engineer as soon as possible to report the problem. The Chief Engineer's number (as well as other e-board members' numbers) will be on a list in the studio.

What if the Next DJ Does Not Show?

Missing your show without finding a sub is inexcusable. But at some point the DJ after you may fail to show up. The first thing you should do is call the next DJ to remind them of their show. A list of DJ phone numbers can be found in the back office. If you cannot get in touch with the DJ and s/he is more than 10 minutes late, please call the Programming Director. If the Program Director cannot be reached, call the General Manager or any other WAMH e-board member on the list. If you have exhausted the options listed above, turn the station off and notifying the Keefe Center manager before departing.

What if the FCC Calls?

If the FCC or any other official-sounding people call regarding the station, please get in touch with the General Manager or another e-board member as soon as possible.

The WAMH Music Library

There are five means in which a DJ can broadcast music at WAMH: using our Spotify account or anything online on the Dell above the mixing board, CD players, record players, or by using an RCA connector that allows you to broadcast mp3 files from your mobile device or laptop. While most DJs broadcast music in a digital format, and we plan to one day soon completely digitize our music library, CDs are still used often. Thus, keeping the WAMH library in order is essential.

- 1) Do not remove any CDs or records from the library. The library is meant to serve WAMH DJs and if any music is missing, this disrupts a DJ's show. If anybody is found to have stolen music out of the library, full disciplinary action will be taken.
- 2) Always put away any music you take out of the library. This will ensure that the MCR is kept tidy and that other DJs are able to find the music they want to play.
- 3) Please treat all CDs and records with respect, as it is costly to replace music. Don't leave CDs or albums lying around where they are at risk of being scratched. Remember that records must be stored standing upright, as they will warp if you do not.
- 4) If a CD or record is missing or damaged, please write it down in the comment book. This is the only sure way that the music directors will know about it and do their best to get it replaced.

Designing a Radio Program

When you sit down in front of the microphone, you are representing WAMH and Amherst College to many people within our 60-mile broadcast range and those tuning in around the world via the webcast. As a WAMH DJ, it should be your primary concern to air high quality shows-- with 1) the new music requirement, 2) thoughtful music selection, 3) informed dialogue, and 4) smooth transitions between songs and blocks of music.

A. The New Music Requirement: The philosophy of progressive radio dictates that all music-oriented shows on WAMH play at least 25% new music. A song must have been released in the past three months to be considered new. Music directors read show playlists and know if a show is not meeting this requirement. If your theme is very specific (e.g., 80s hair-rock or Electroswing only) special permission must be given by the Program Director to be exempt from this requirement. WAMH's mission is to provide a "listening alternative" and an important way of doing this is playing new music not only from big name artists, but also up-and-coming musicians. Also, record companies are generous enough to send us lots of free new music; in return, we are expected to give the music they send us exposure. We aim to create programming that one would not typically hear on commercial stations and expose our listeners to new, exciting music. Please refer to recommended lists and stacks of recommended CDs constructed by the Music Directors for new and interesting selections.

B. Intelligent Music Selection & Targeting Your Audience: As a DJ, you must define the format of your show in relation to your target audience. You must decide who you want your audience to be, and then cater your music selection to them. By delivering a consistent format with a variety of music, you will find that 1) you will continually expand your abilities beyond playing your favorites every week, and 2) you will develop a core of devoted listeners.

C. Informed Dialogue: A fifteen to twenty minute set is about as long as you can go without pausing to recap the songs that you have played. Twenty minutes is very long for a listener who is waiting to hear the title of a song you played at the beginning of your set. Always have an idea of what you're going to say before you go on live and try to vary your language. Saying, "And before that we heard..." repeatedly will bore your listeners. Bring up information about the artist or that album that you think listeners would find interesting. If somebody requests something you are not familiar with, but you play it and it's not quite what you expected, don't announce how awful the song was and apologize. Simply move on with your show. When reading PSAs, or just talking, speak with enthusiasm, not in a monotone, deadpan voice.

Accessibility of your show is quite important. Listeners should feel like you are a real person and that you are offering them a bit of music and info instead of forcing your musical tastes upon them. Make it sound like you want them to listen, and you're doing the show for them.

D. Segues and Song Selection: The transition from the end of a song to the beginning of the next one is a segue. There are no sure-fire formulas for good segues, but knowing how a song begins and ends and planning accordingly is important. One good option is crossfading between songs. This can be done on iTunes by going to Preferences and selecting "Crossfade Songs." On Spotify, go to Edit -> Preferences -> "Show Advanced Settings." Under "Playback," turn on "Crossfade tracks."

One way to improve your sets is the so-called “wave theory.” Make your whole show flow on a larger scale by alternating between hard/up-tempo songs with softer/low-tempo songs within your sets. This method is much better than a whole set of hard rock, followed by a whole set of acoustic rock..ad nauseam. Utilize the live breaks and SIDs to your advantage by starting a new set with something completely different. If you do this, your show will have greater variation - which makes for better radio. New songs work quite well to start sets. If you introduce it, people will keep listening to check it out.

E. Tips for Going on the Air: For many people, the most difficult portion of their show to improve beyond an amateur level is their on-microphone skill. You ultimately want to get across the idea that you and the audience are having fun listening to some good music from a good DJ. If you sound like you’re tired or bored, your audience will be turned off and turn you off. Here are a few suggestions:

- First and foremost-- pace! And the key word is-- slow! The rest of these hints will be easy if you just get used to speaking a little more slowly than you usually would. Constantly remind yourself of this.
- Enunciate every syllable clearly. This is the only way listeners will understand your interesting and informative banter.
- Avoid saying “um” and “uh”. The best way to do this is to have what you are going to say all mapped out in your head, and then to speak slowly.
- Avoid moving your mouth in relation to the microphone. When you turn your head to see what song you’ve cued up or if the turntable is on, your volume levels change drastically and it can sound like you are unprepared.
- Don’t grab the mic by the face or move it while you are speaking on the air. It has a tendency to make squeaking noises.
- Don’t forget that you are a representative of the station. Occasionally use “we” instead of “I” to make WAMH sound more like a cohesive unit. Don’t make the station sound bad by saying that you think a record was stolen, the equipment doesn’t work, a CD is scratched, or that the next DJ is late. To the listener, it sounds as though the station is unprofessional and full of amateur DJs.
- Relax and smile. A listener can tell if the DJ is smiling, relaxed, and having fun.
- Like most skills, the only way to improve is to practice. We encourage you to occasionally record your show (using Mixlr), listen to it, and recognize ways in which you can improve upon the aforementioned attributes of a successful show.

Rules and Regulations

A few important rules, all based in common sense:

- 1) According to FCC regulations, no songs with obscene language may be broadcasted before 10 p.m. WAMH does allow songs with a stray indecency here and there to be aired. You must read the obscenity disclaimer before or after each song with obscenity before 10 PM. In playing songs with obscenity, there is a clear line between songs calculated to offend and songs containing an occasional obscenity. Examples of the former are songs like “Bitches Ain’t Shit” or “Slip It In.” Note that this last song contains no actual obscene words but is entirely about sexual intercourse. Do not play any song that falls into this category. If you have any doubts as to which group a song falls into, it’s best not to play it. Songs defined by their obscenity are not suitable for airplay at any time. It is never ok for you to speak obscenity on the air, even if the word appears in a song title or group name, regardless of the time.
- 2) If a fire alarm goes off during your show, try to push PLAY on an entire album, but in all instances, evacuate the building! If there is some dead air, just get on and apologize. There are smoke detectors in the station. If one goes off during your show, you owe the College \$100. This means absolutely no smoking, as it also damages the equipment.
- 3) DJs who go on the air while intoxicated, in any way, will lose their privileges to broadcast on WAMH. No alcohol is allowed in the radio station or in the campus center.
- 4) You are held fully responsible for anything your untrained guests do while in the station.
- 5) WAMH exists to serve the public interest, exclusively, and that public interest extends far beyond the borders of the Amherst College campus. This means that your show should also orient itself to those who are not part of the Amherst College community. In short, no messages to friends, no announcements of parties and no dedications of any kind, as these all sounds very unprofessional.
- 6) It is your obligation to do your show or find a trained, approved substitute. If you can’t find a sub after trying the entire sub list, email wamh.amherst@gmail.com at least 24 hours before the show. Failure to do a show without notice and the use of unapproved substitutes are both punishable by immediate suspension.
- 7) Under no circumstances do WAMH CDs or records leave the premises, as it will be considered theft. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law and will be brought up before the Disciplinary Board for college disciplinary action.
- 8) Re-shelve all music you take out during your show in the proper place. It is easiest to re-shelve throughout your show instead of waiting until the end when you have a huge pile.
- 9) Never announce ticket prices or where tickets can be purchased over the air, unless it is a WAMH event, as it is illegal. We are a non-commercial station, meaning that we cannot do any sort of advertising.

10) When technical things go wrong, call the Chief Engineer or General Manager immediately and without hesitation or fear of reprisal. WAMH is expensive and delicate, and only our engineer fully understands it.