



BOS! Belgium Outdoor Shack

ACTIVATOR GUIDE



How to Conduct a Valid BLHA Activation

Belgian Lighthouse & Lightship Awards – Activator Guide

ACTIVATION AREA

max. 1,000 m + line of sight

REPEATER QSOS

not valid

REFERENCE FORMAT

BEL xxx

Choose a lighthouse/lightship → Check the reference → Check the 1,000 m activation area → Confirm line of sight → Set up your station → Make valid QSOS → Upload your log → Check your BLHA statistics.

BLHA - Belgian Lighthouse & Lightship Awards is the BOS! amateur radio program dedicated to Belgian lighthouses and lightships. It combines portable amateur radio with the exploration of Belgium's maritime heritage. As an activator, you visit an official BLHA reference, set up your portable radio station and make radio contacts with other radio amateurs. Your activation is then processed through the BOS! Log & Award System.

1 Choose an Official BLHA Reference

Start by selecting a lighthouse or lightship listed as an official BLHA reference. Always use the reference information shown in the BOS! BLHA system.

Before leaving, check: the official BLHA reference, the name and location of the lighthouse or lightship, the reference position used by the BLHA system, the maximum 1,000-metre activation distance, whether the reference will remain in direct line of sight from your operating position, access restrictions and any applicable local regulations.

 Do not use a self-created or unofficial reference.

2 Understand the BLHA Activation Area

This is one of the most important requirements for a valid BLHA activation. Your radio station must be located within a maximum distance of **1,000 metres** from the lighthouse or lightship reference **and** within direct line of sight of it. Activators should always operate as close to the reference as practical, while respecting access, safety and local restrictions.

3 Verify Your Position on Site

Before starting the activation, confirm that your operating position satisfies both BLHA location requirements: maximum 1,000 metres and line of sight. Useful tools: smartphone GPS, BOS! maps and BLHA reference information, GPS receiver or mapping software.

 **Important:** The distance should be checked against the official BLHA reference location, not simply against a nearby road, parking area or visitor entrance.

Example — A location 600 metres from the lighthouse, clearly visible →  can satisfy the requirement. A location 900 metres away, with the lighthouse completely hidden behind buildings, terrain or vegetation →  the line-of-sight requirement is not satisfied.

4 Make Sure You Have Legal Access

A BLHA reference does not automatically give you permission to enter private property or restricted areas. Check whether the area is publicly accessible, respect private property and obtain permission where required, respect opening hours and access restrictions, observe parking and antenna restrictions, follow nature reserve, coastal and local regulations, choose a safe operating position that does not obstruct visitors or traffic. If the lighthouse or lightship itself cannot be entered, you may operate from another suitable location, provided the BLHA distance and line-of-sight requirements are met.

5 Prepare Your Portable Station

Transceiver, antenna and coaxial cable, battery or other permitted power source, headset or microphone, laptop/tablet or logging device, backup logging method, smartphone/GPS, any equipment required to install the antenna safely.

Check before departure: battery charged, antenna tested, coax checked, logging software working, UTC correctly configured, BLHA reference entered correctly, activation location checked, 1,000-metre maximum distance confirmed, line of sight confirmed.

6 Announce Your Activation

Recommended, so chasers know when and where to expect your signal.

Field	Example
Activator	ON3XXX/P
BLHA	[reference]
Lighthouse/Lightship	[name]
Date	28 September 2026
Start	08:00 UTC
Bands	40m / 20m / 2m
Modes	SSB / FM / CW

Use the BOS! agenda, website and other appropriate channels to announce your activity.

7 Start Your BLHA Activation

“CQ CQ, this is ON3XXX portable, activating BLHA.” / “CQ BLHA, CQ BLHA, this is ON3XXX/P.”

Mention the BLHA reference regularly so that chasers know exactly which lighthouse or lightship they are working.

8 All Legally Permitted Bands and Modes Are Accepted

BLHA accepts all legally permitted amateur radio bands and modes (HF, VHF, UHF; SSB, FM, CW and other legal modes), provided operation complies with the applicable amateur radio licence and regulations. Always follow the applicable band plan, power limits, licence conditions and national regulations.

9 Repeater QSOs Are Not Valid

✗ Repeater QSOs are **not** valid for BLHA credit. BLHA credit must be based on valid amateur radio contacts made in accordance with the program rules.

10 Make Valid QSOs

A valid QSO should represent a genuine two-way amateur radio contact. Exchange the information required for a normal amateur radio contact and make sure the callsigns are correctly recorded.

Example — Activator: “ON4ABC, you are 59. BLHA reference BEL 008.” Chaser: “ON3XXX, you are 59. Thank you.”

11 Log Every QSO Accurately

Your log should contain: date, UTC time, worked station callsign, band/frequency, mode, signal report where applicable, correct BLHA reference. Use UTC in your log rather than local Belgian time. Check that your logging software is correctly configured before you start.

12 Use the Correct BLHA Reference

Make sure the lighthouse or lightship reference stored in your log exactly corresponds to the reference used by the BOS! BLHA system. A wrong or missing reference can prevent the activation from being correctly associated with the intended BLHA reference.

13 Work the Chasers

Operate clearly, identify your reference regularly and keep your log accurate. Work stations systematically when a pile-up develops, repeat callsigns when necessary to avoid logging errors, do not record a contact you did not actually make, avoid accidental duplicate entries, prioritise an accurate log over making contacts as quickly as possible.

14 Photograph Your Activation

A photograph is a useful way to document your outdoor activity and show the lighthouse or lightship being activated — where practical: the lighthouse or lightship, your portable station, your antenna, the surrounding operating location. Always respect the site, visitors, private property and any photography restrictions.

15 End Your Activation

“This is ON3XXX/P, BLHA reference [XXXX], going QRT. Thanks for all the contacts!”

Stop logging, check your log, take down the antenna safely, pack your equipment, remove all cables and materials, leave the area clean and undisturbed.

16 Check Your Log Before Upload

Correct callsigns, correct date, correct UTC times, correct bands/frequencies, correct modes, correct signal reports, correct BLHA reference, no contacts that were not actually made, no accidental duplicate entries.

17 Upload Your Log to BOS!

Activators should upload their logs directly on the BOS! BLHA website via the Login page to receive BLHA activation credit: belgiumoutdoorshack.be/blha/login.html. Log in to your account and follow the available instructions to submit your activation log.

18 Check Your BLHA Statistics

Check: the correct BLHA reference, your activation being registered, your QSO information being processed correctly, your updated BLHA progress and award status. If you identify a problem, contact the BOS! team — avoid repeatedly uploading the same log when an issue occurs.

19 BLHA Digital Awards

BLHA awards are provided free of charge and are available exclusively in digital PDF format. They can be downloaded directly from your BOS! account on the Login page once you reach the relevant award milestone: Activate BLHA references → Upload your logs → Build your BLHA progress → Reach an award milestone → Download your digital PDF award.

20 Keep Exploring

BLHA is designed to encourage radio amateurs to explore Belgium's lighthouses and lightships while enjoying portable amateur radio. Select another reference, plan another outdoor trip and continue building your BLHA activity.

21 Respect the Spirit of BLHA

BLHA relies on the honesty and fair play of all participants: submit only genuine QSOs, operate within the permitted activation area, respect the line-of-sight requirement, follow amateur radio regulations, respect property, nature, visitors and local restrictions, submit accurate logs. Decisions regarding submitted or non-submitted awards are final and will not be discussed.

The 7 Golden BLHA Rules

- 1 OFFICIAL REFERENCE — Use an official BLHA lighthouse or lightship reference.
- 2 1,000 METRES — Operate no more than 1,000 metres from the reference.
- 3 LINE OF SIGHT — Keep the lighthouse/lightship in direct line of sight.
- 4 AS CLOSE AS PRACTICAL — Operate as close to the reference as practical.
- 5 NO REPEATERS — Repeater QSOs are not valid for BLHA.
- 6 ACCURATE LOG — Record genuine contacts and the correct BLHA reference.
- 7 UPLOAD — Upload your log through the BOS! BLHA system to receive activator credit.

Choose a lighthouse or lightship → Check the 1,000 m area → Confirm line of sight → Set up your station → Make valid QSOs → Upload your log → Check your BOS! statistics.

BLHA - Belgian Lighthouse & Lightship Awards. BOS! Belgium Outdoor Shack.

BLHA Activator - Quick Checklist

A. Before Departure

- ☐ Official BLHA reference selected
- ☐ Reference checked in the BOS! system
- ☐ Maximum 1,000-metre distance checked
- ☐ Line-of-sight requirement confirmed
- ☐ Access and local restrictions checked
- ☐ Battery charged
- ☐ Antenna tested
- ☐ Logging software tested
- ☐ UTC configured
- ☐ BLHA reference entered correctly
- ☐ Activation announced, where practical

B. At the Location

- ☐ Safe operating position selected
- ☐ Within 1,000 metres of the reference
- ☐ Lighthouse/lightship in direct line of sight
- ☐ Station set up safely
- ☐ Antenna installed
- ☐ Logging started
- ☐ Correct BLHA reference configured

C. During the Activation

- ☐ Call CQ BLHA
- ☐ Announce the BLHA reference regularly
- ☐ Log callsigns correctly
- ☐ Use UTC
- ☐ Record band and mode
- ☐ Record signal reports where applicable
- ☐ Do not use repeater QSOs
- ☐ Operate only on legally permitted bands/modes
- ☐ Maintain the required distance and line of sight

D. After the Activation

- ☐ Announce QRT
- ☐ Check the log
- ☐ Take a useful activation photograph, where practical
- ☐ Remove antenna and equipment safely
- ☐ Leave the location clean
- ☐ Upload the log via the BOS! BLHA Login page
- ☐ Check BLHA statistics
- ☐ Download any newly achieved digital award