

TIME CODE FAQs

Why have you gone over to 434 MHz for your Time Code units?

Our first Time Code Transmitter around 10 years ago was on 418 MHz. The police TETRA radio network which was, unbelievably, later allowed to also use 418 MHz scuppered that frequency.

We then moved to 433.92 MHz and were then legally allowed to use transmitters with 20 times the power. Now all was fine - but only for a while! Now every man and his dog is on 433.92 MHz! Security alarms, car entry systems, garage door openers and cranes. Yes, cranes! The conversation we kept hearing went like this:

*"Why has my Time Code Transmitter stopped working?"
"Are you filming a crane, or near a crane?"
"Yes - how did you know!"*

So you see, we have been forced to move again and now our new units are on 434.075 MHz.

Is there any good news?

It's not all bad news. The new 434.075 MHz system is narrow band, which means it is almost immune to interference. The Receiver is now around 100 times as sensitive, giving a range of up to 1km. We reckon it is virtually as good as a BNC cable up to about 100 metres. The system is very robust.

We listened to you and the Miniature Transmitter is now completely re-designed. It no longer attaches directly to the time code out BNC socket, but rather connects via a short cable. This will prevent the high incidence of damage to the BNCs we have experienced. The new Miniature Transmitter has two Hirose 4 pin power sockets so you get back your socket to power other accessories without using a Y lead. You'll see that it is now housed in a virtually indestructible and very sexy blue anodised case, still only 5 cms long.

The new standard Receiver can now be powered either from the internal PP3 battery, or from external 12v via a Hirose 4 pin socket. Power switching is electronic and automatic - no need to remove the battery when using external power.

Can I still buy Time Code units on 433 MHz and 418 MHz?

We have stopped selling 418 MHz units as the frequency is now almost unusable due to interference from the TETRA radio network. There are now over 1,000 of these TETRA transmitters in the UK, mostly on 25W power. The police are amongst the main users so it is almost impossible to escape from interference.

433 MHz is becoming increasingly congested (see the above question) and because it is wide band can suffer from de-sensitising from TETRA 430 MHz signals. So we have decided to discontinue manufacture of 433 MHz unit too.

For a limited time we will build 433 MHz additional Receivers and Readers to order for clients who still have the old units.

Do you still repair or upgrade Time Code units on 433 MHz and 418 MHz?

We will continue to repair both 433 MHz and 418 MHz Time Code units as long as spare parts are available.

We can upgrade Time Code Readers and Time Code Receivers from 418 MHz and 433 MHz to the new 434 MHz frequency. However, since the new 434 MHz Miniature Transmitter is completely new design, both mechanically and electronically, you would need to purchase a new Miniature Transmitter (although we can upgrade the Self Powered Transmitters by changing the electronic module inside).

I've read that the new units on 434 MHz are on narrow-band. What exactly is meant by narrow-band?

Our previous radio time code systems on 418 MHz and 433 MHz were wide-band units. This means that the Receiver received a range of frequencies either side of the Transmitter frequency.

The new narrow band crystal controlled system only receives the very precise frequency of our Transmitter which means that interfering signals on nearby frequencies are rejected and don't cause any interference.

In addition the Transmitter has a higher power output and the Receiver is also much more sensitive. All together this produces a much more robust link.

Why don't you include the cables with your Time Code and Video Sender units?

Firstly, everybody wants different cables. Take for instance power leads, some people want a Hirose, some a PAG circular plug, some a 2 pin Power Tap, and other may want bare ends to attach their own odd ball connector. Then people want different lengths as well. When it comes to BNC's, some want straight, some want right-angled, some want thin cable, some want thick, and so on. To cater for all these whims I would have to bundle so many cables with each unit that the cost of the cables would far exceed the cost of the unit!

You must also remember that most hire companies make their own cables in-house and certainly don't want to be lumbered with unnecessary costs and lots of unwanted leads. Many Freelancers will also have plenty of BNC's and power leads anyway.

We know most of you want the lowest price for our units and prefer to order any custom cables they may need separately.

I'm having trouble sorting a time code problem but I don't have a Time Code Reader to hand. How can I tell if time code is coming out of the socket?

You can easily hear time code using an ordinary pair of headphones. Just touch the tip of the headphone jack on the centre pin of the BNC lead or socket whilst grounding the headphone jack sleeve with your hand and using your other hand to touch the metalwork of the time code apparatus. How firmly you grasp the metalwork acts as a volume control! The familiar chirpy time code sound can easily be heard without an amplifier. This method can provide a quick rough check on BNC leads if no meter is available.

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