

Phone Interview and Callin Setup

When you put a caller on the air, special equipment called a *telephone interface* is used to connect the caller, and it requires a special setup of the mixer board. In addition to putting the caller's voice on the air, this setup lets you talk to the caller using the studio microphones, and hear the caller through the headphones – you don't use the normal telephone handset. There is a telephone interface in each studio.

The necessary connections at the patch bay are all “normalled”, meaning that they are automatically connected **when there is no patch cord plugged in**. Check to see that there is **no patch cord** in jacks *A (or B) Rem 2* or *A (or B) Telint In*. *Note: A Telint In was formerly labeled 39010 Telint In.*

Each mike that will be used to talk to the caller must be specially set: press both **PGM** and **UTIL** – in A this is kinda tricky, make sure *both* buttons latch down.

Find the **Symmetrix TI-101** phone interface unit. In A it's in the rack about counter height; in B it's in the wall unit below the modulation meters. It's grey and about 2 inches high. Set all six knobs to their center positions. Make sure the **LINK** button (far right) is popped out.

Either the control room phone or (in A) the studio phone can be used to connect to the caller. You won't be able to use this phone for anything else while the caller is on the air, so (in A) it's often easiest to use the phone in the outer studio for this to keep the control room phone free. To put the caller on air, press the line button for the line being used, then press the **ON** button. You may find it easiest to have an assistant in the studio doing this, so you can still answer the control room phone to screen callers. *Never answer the phone on the air*. This violates FCC regulations, which require that you warn the caller **before** putting him on the air. Generally, you need an assistant to handle listener call-ins. They can screen the calls, and warn the callers, then alert you to the call.

If you're talking to the caller and want to put him on air immediately, press the **ON** button on your phone, then hang up the handset.

When you're talking to the caller, adjust your microphone level in the normal way. Adjust the caller's level on-air with the **REM 2** control. If the caller's level is too low, adjust the **Receive Level** knob on the TI-101 (third from left) as needed. The **CLIP** light next to that knob should flash only rarely, otherwise you'll have distortion. If the caller has trouble hearing you, adjust the **Send Level** knob (second from left) as needed. The **CLIP** light should flash only rarely.

Extra credit: You can adjust the tone quality of the caller's voice on-air with the **Equalization** knobs (the two rightmost knobs on the TI-101).

If you are taking calls on the air, you must use the delay box. This protects us against airing obscenities and getting a big fine (\$7000 and up) from the FCC. The only exception is when the caller is known and trusted (e.g. a staff member).

Practice!

Before you do a call-in on the air, practice the technique in Studio B. The equipment there is identical to Studio A, with two exceptions:

- In Studio A, you can use either the control room phone or the studio phone to select a line and control the connection. In B, only the control room phone is equipped for this.
- The mike mixers in B allow you to select multiple outputs (PGM and UTIL) easily – the buttons are not interlocked. In A, the buttons don't like to be both in at once, and you have to hold them both down and wiggle them a bit to get them both to latch down.

Can you hear me now?

It's embarrassing to tell a caller (and our listeners) that they're going on-air, and then it doesn't work (*"Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?"*), so you need to test things.

You can do this quite easily:

- Have a helper pick up the hallway phone and dial studio A (extension 121).
- Push the **121** button on the control room phone and press **ON** just as you would to put a real caller on air, but don't say anything on-air about this.
- Have your helper listen on the phone while you do a mic break (or, if you're doing a talk show, while your on-air talent is talking). Can they hear you OK? Remember, every source that callers are to hear must have **UTIL** selected in addition to **PGM**.
- Have your helper make a brief comment on the air. Figure out something you can have them say that fits into what you're doing, so it doesn't sound weird on the air (but also so listeners don't realize anything is wrong if your helper *can't* be heard on the air).

When all this is working, you're ready for a real caller.

Troubleshooting

Caller can't hear you: Make sure the microphone(s) to be heard by the caller have **UTIL** and **PGM** *both* selected. In Studio A it's hard to get both buttons to latch down. Make sure there's no patch in **A Telint IN**. Check the **SEND** control on the telephone interface.

You can't hear caller: Make sure you have **REM 2** selected on the mixer module you're using, and that it's set to **PGM**. Make sure there's no patch into **A (or B) REM 2**. Check the **Receive** control on the telephone interface.

Feedback (squeals and echoes): If you get a squeal when you turn up the caller's input, or an echo or "ringing" effect, check to make sure that the caller input (normally **REM 2**) has only **PGM** selected (*not UTIL*).

Using the Delay Box

The *delay box* is a device that delays the signal sent through it for about 3.2 seconds. This delay gives you time to react when a caller suddenly starts using offensive language on the air.

To use delay while on the air from Studio A:

1. You listen to **PGM** instead of **AIR** (about the only time you should do this). If possible, have someone monitor AIR elsewhere in the station.
2. To begin delay, play some nondescript tune for at least 4 seconds, hit the white **DELAY** button in studio switch (lighted buttons above console). Airsound is now 3.2 seconds behind real time – so last 3.2 seconds of your music will repeat on air (which is why you need a nondescript tune). Stay in delay mode until you're through with callins or need to dump a caller. Pressing the green **A** button cancels the delay.
3. Tell the caller to turn his radio down when he's on air.
4. If caller utters a *no-no*:
 - **Hit OFF on the mixer** used for caller input.
 - **Hit A on the studio switch** to undo the split. You are now back on real time, leaping 3 seconds ahead, so the last 3 seconds of your conversation with the caller is dumped.
 - **Go on air** (if not already), and say something like "you can't say that on the radio."
 - **Dump the caller** by pressing **OFF** on the phone. Play some filler music or a PSA.
5. Go back to delay mode (step 2 above) before the next call. Do not put any caller back on air if you've had to dump him.