

*How Do I...?*

*An Occasional Series*

*This Week:*

*What Can I Hear On  
Railroad Radio  
In Central Pennsylvania?*

*Updated November 28, 2020*



Many of the visitors to our Radio Club CARC website have an interest in trains. Radios and Frequencies go hand-in-hand. Trains and Frequencies probably go hand-in-hand as well.

It seems like it would be useful to know what frequencies are in use. Here in Central Pennsylvania we have a variety of frequencies in use by Norfolk Southern, CSX, Amtrak and a variety of smaller railroads. While you cannot transmit on these frequencies, listening in can be fun and informative.

## **THE MAIN FREQUENCIES:**

Consolidated Rail Corp (Conrail) had 4 main frequencies. A train could run from Harrisburg, PA to Chicago, IL and never leave Road Channel One (160.800 MHz). Today Norfolk Southern operates this line.

For this article we are going to have lists, and perhaps presume you know the area. Possibly at some point we have some maps.

**In November 2020 Norfolk Southern made some major changes to their radio systems. These changes are shown in red.**

## **NORFOLK SOUTHERN**

### **Harrisburg Terminal 160.980 MHz (AAR 58)**

The **Harrisburg Terminal** has changed over the years. Today the **Harrisburg Terminal** desk covers from **TARA**, just east of Rutherford Yard to **CANNON** at Duncannon PA. It also covers the Lurgan Line from **CAPITAL** (downtown Harrisburg around 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Paxton Street) to Shippensburg, PA. It also controls the east end of Enola Yard limits to **STELL** on the border of Camp Hill and Wormleysburg, PA and up the **River Line** from **ROCKVILLE** to **STONEY**. **STONEY** is near Dauphin, PA. This is ex-Pennsylvania Railroad/Conrail trackage and Reading Railroad/Conrail.

Note: Effective 2019 Harrisburg Terminal also covers CANNON (Duncannon) to MCVEY (McVeytown, PA) **formerly on 160.800 MHz. (AAR 46) is now Harrisburg Terminal Channel 1 160.860 MHz (AAR 50) and Harrisburg Terminal Channel 2 160.350 MHz (AAR 16)**

### **Hagerstown Desk 160.980 MHz (AAR 58)**

Covers Shippensburg to Hagerstown. How does it do that on 160.980 MHz? That is where the magic of the DTMF keypad and CTCSS tones comes into play. To listen, you do not need the tones, or any special programming. This is ex-Pennsylvania Railroad/Conrail trackage. Note: This operation could be moving to **160.950.MHz**

### **Buffalo Line 160.860 MHz (AAR 50)**

**Stoney** to Sunbury, PA The same individual may also cover **Harrisburg East** or the **River Line** desk and use the wrong reply. This is ex-Pennsylvania Railroad/Conrail trackage.

### **Hagerstown District. 160.950 MHz (AAR 56)**

**also 160.245 MHz (AAR 9) and 160.830 MHz (AAR 48)**

This is Norfolk Southern, ex-Norfolk and Western trackage from Hagerstown, MD to Shenandoah, VA. The same individual runs the **Hagerstown Desk** in an effort to keep trains moving through the Hagerstown bottleneck better.

### **Harrisburg East 160.860 MHz (AAR 50)**

Philadelphia to **TARA**. Mostly ex-Reading Railroad/Conrail.

### **Allegheny formerly on 160.800 MHz is now Allegheny Channel 1: 160.875 MHz (AAR 51) and Allegheny Channel 2: 161.505 MHz (AAR 93) from Conpitt to McVey**

This territory was redone in 2019. Previously Pittsburgh East and Altoona East controlled the Pittsburgh to Duncannon, PA lines. Probably to reduce black holes and improve traffic flow through Harrisburg, Altoona East was eliminated. **Allegheny now handles Pittsburgh to MCVEY and Harrisburg Terminal now does MCVEY to CANNON. This is ex-Pennsylvania Railroad/Conrail trackage.**

### **Reading 160.860 MHz (AAR 50)**

Wyomissing to Blandon, PA . Ex-Reading Railroad/Conrail.

### **River Line 161.070 MHz (AAR 64)**

The **River Line** is also from 2019. The **Harrisburg Terminal** lost a variety of secondary lines and this is sort a miscellaneous collection of ex-PRR trackage.

**York Secondary** ex-PRR **Wago** to York, PA

**Shippensburg Secondary.** Despite the name, it ends in Carlisle, PA. ex-PRR from Lemoyne to Carlisle, PA.

**Port Road** **Stell** to Perryville, MD. Ex-PRR

**Royalton Branch** ex-PRR **Roy** Royalton, PA to **Shocks** Marietta, PA.

### **Enola Yard 161.445 MHz (AAR 89)**

Enola Yard Operations are on 161.445.MHz. The Diesel Shop is 160.305 MHz.

**The Enola Yard repeater receives 161.445 MHz and transmits on 160.605 MHz**

### **Harrisburg Yard 160.410 MHz (AAR 20)**

**The Harrisburg Yard repeater receives 160.410 MHz and transmits on 161.265 MHz**

### **Rutherford Yard 160.800 MHz (AAR 46)**

**Rutherford Yard repeater receives 160.665 MHz and transmits on 161.220 MHz**

## **AMTRAK 160.635 MHz**

Keystone Corridor-Harrisburg to Philadelphia, PA

## **CSX**

CSX uses **160.230 MHz** and **160.320 MHz** on the ex B&O lines in PA, MD and WV.

**Hanover SUB** (BF desk) from Hagerstown, MD through Gettysburg, PA **161.400 MHz**

**Cumberland Terminal** (BB desk) uses **161.520 MHz**

**Hagerstown Yard** **161.160 MHz** also **160.275 MHz**

## **OTHERS**

**Allentown & Auburn** (Kutzown to Topton, PA) **(AAR 56) 160.950 MHz**

**Lancaster & Northern** (Sinking Springs to Stevens, PA) **(AAR 48) 160.830 MHz**

**Note: may be 159.8625 MHz**

<b>Gettysburg</b>	<b>(AAR 75)</b>	<b>161.235 MHz</b>
<b>Middletown &amp; Hummelstown</b>	<b>(AAR 93)</b>	<b>161.505 MHz</b>
<b>Strasburg</b>	<b>(AAR 75)</b>	<b>161.235 MHz</b>

## **Have fun - but stay off the railroad property!**

---

Elsewhere in the ***How Do I...*** series you can follow the trail to these interesting articles where we have explored fun stuff you can do with Amateur Radio and trains.

<https://www.radioclub-carc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Playing-With-Trains.pdf>

<https://www.radioclub-carc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/AAR-railroad-frequencies.pdf>