



Equipment Review

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ALINCO TWO-METRE HAND-HELD FM TRANSCEIVER

The Alinco hand-held is a small basic two-metre FM transceiver. It is not complicated and works very well. Just the thing to tuck in your pocket or slip in your overnight bag.

When I first opened the box I was amazed at the size of the radio. The works will fit with ease in the palm of your hand. Indeed the radio itself is about the same size as the battery pack which slips onto the bottom of the radio.

Nickel Cadmium batteries are used in the battery pack and included with the transceiver is a charging stand. This charging stand can be used with any source of 13.8 Volts DC. The car electrical system is just fine. Any mains operated 13.8 Volt supply at home will be okay. The auxiliary output of the main DC Supply would be excellent. Alternatively a plug pack could be purchased if you wished.

A charging stand which uses DC input is really much better than some of the plug packs which occasionally appear. Plug packs, by the way, have to be of an approved type for use in Australia. This is not just a whim but is for a number of very good safety reasons. An adaptor plug or bending the pins is just not on.

With such a simple radio the instructions can be accommodated adequately on one large sheet folded into a smaller book sized folder. As well as the instructions a circuit diagram and block diagram is provided. Very useful but I do not think very many of us will be delving inside. The use of very small components of high reliability and four layer circuit boards rules out the plumbers iron repairs and modifications.

Frequency setting is by small thumb-wheel switches which means that putting it in your pocket won't result in a strange frequency being keyed up. A set of rotary frequency setting switches are provided along with an adjusting tool to provide a memory channel. The tool is thoughtfully attached to the wrist strap so you can't lose it. By operating two push buttons it is possible to swap between memory channel and the main frequency or to monitor both channels for activity.

Battery life is, of course, limited but a battery save function is available via a slide switch. This enables extended monitoring to be carried out with a much reduced battery drain.

Low power operation is also provided so that where a few hundred milliwatts will suffice battery drain can be reduced.

Normal power output is in the two watt class. Unfortunately I could not accurately measure the output power as my power meter is not intended for this power level. The output connector is also one I had not seen before and looks to be a cross between an RCA and a Type F. I could convince an RCA adaptor to make the connection but would have preferred a proper adaptor.



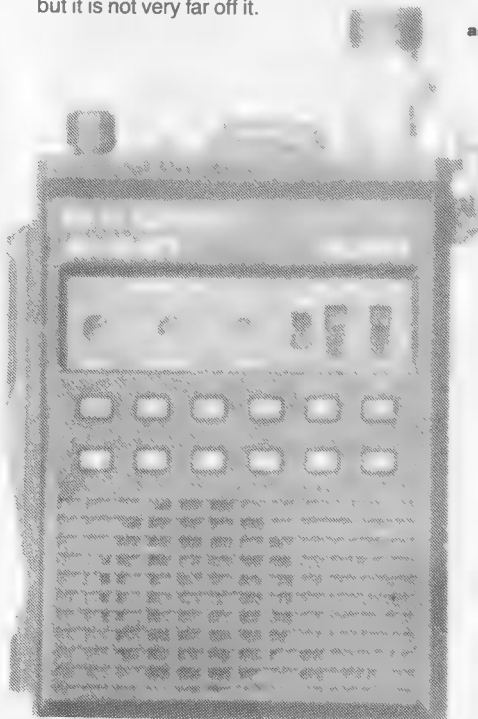
Partial view of the top of the unit.

A short rubber duck antenna is supplied and its size compliments the size of the radio.

Dual tone multi-frequency buttons are provided so that dialling through a repeater access to the telephone is possible if you visit the USA. This is not available in Australia as our phone system is different. Still it can be handy for other remote control applications.

On the air I could access many repeaters and even made a contact from inside a city building. That was from the side of the building away from the repeater too. A creditable performance.

Summing up the Alinco is a very serviceable and useful Two-Metre Hand-held FM transceiver. Just the thing for travelling or to take with you any where. Not quite down to Dick Tracey size but it is not very far off it.



Front control panel of the transceiver.



Full-sized view of the transceiver with battery pack attached.