

Online Radio School

**Broadcast
Levels of
Doom!**



RADIO LEVELS

PPM's, VU & LED Meters

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Prefading a Source

PFL: Music

Always fast forward to the loudest part of the source. If this is a song, find the loudest part and then set the levels from there.

PFL: Musician

If it's a musician in the studio, then set the levels on the loudest part of their song (i.e. when they're strumming the hardest).

PFL: Guests

Get your guest on a microphone to speak normally at first. Ask them to describe their journey to the studio. Set their levels while they answer.

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WARNING!

When you're setting your guest's levels, they will talk lower at first. However, once they come to speak on air, then their nerves tend to make them speak much louder. Therefore, keep a finger on the fader (to drop it or raise it) on their first reply.

When you're setting your guest's levels, ask them to stay in the same position when they answer questions during the show. If you don't ask them this, their levels will bounce all over the place during the interview. This is because they'll be nervous. They will sometimes lean into the mic, other times; they will pull back from the mic. Don't be embarrassed to ask them to stay in the same place when they're talking.

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“Dave. If you could just stay in that position whenever you answer my questions, then you’re going to sound great. However, if you see me pull my hand towards myself then this means please come closer to the mic. And if you see me gesture to move away from the mic then please back off a little.”

Tell all your guests this. Trust me they’ll listen. Keep your headphones on and keep an ear on their levels at all times.

Pre Fade Listening a Music Source Using PPM Meters

Find your music fader.

Make sure it is down.

Press the PFL button in.

Press play on your source (CD player, the PC, etc.)

Fast forward to the loudest part of the song.

Adjust the gain button so that the needles bounce between 4 and 5 on the meters.

Levels for Music



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Stop the song and bring it back to the start of the song.

Switch off the PFL button.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk. The output should now be bouncing between 4 and 5 on the meters.

Pre Fade Listening a Mic Using PPM Meters

Find your mic fader.

Make sure it is down.

Press the PFL button in.

Speak into the mic / get the guest to speak into the mic.

Ask them to explain their journey to the studio.

Adjust the gain button so that the needles bounce between 5 and 6 on the PPM.

Levels for Voice



Switch off the PFL button.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk. The output should now be bouncing between 5 and 6 on the meters.

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Pre Fade Listening a Music Source Using VU Meters

Find your music fader.

Make sure it is down.

Press the PFL button in.

Press play on your source (CD player, the PC, etc.)

Fast forward to the loudest part of the song.

Adjust the gain button so that the needle bounces at 0VU.



Stop the song and bring it back to the start of the song.

Switch off the PFL button.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk. The output should now be bouncing at 0VU on the meters.

Pre Fade Listening a Mic Using VU Meters

Find your mic fader.

Make sure it is down.

Press the PFL button in.

Speak into the mic / get the guest to speak into the mic.

Ask them to explain their journey to the studio.

Adjust the gain button so that the needle bounces at 0VU.

Switch off the PFL button.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk.

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The output should now be bouncing at 0VU on the meters.

*In “theory” 0VU “ROUGHLY” equals PPM 5-ish! And I use the word roughly here! It gets way too complicated with maths and equations to go into any further detail, but 0VU is a good starting point. If you do use a desk with a VU meter, then ask your trainer or station manager these questions just to confirm the levels:

What levels am I aiming for on the meters?

Where on the VU meter should my voice be at?

Where on the VU meter should my music be at?

Pre Fade Listening a Music Source Using LED Bar Meters

(Assuming it corresponds to a VU meter!)

Find your music fader.

Make sure it is down.

Press the PFL button in.

Press play on your source (CD player, the PC, etc.)

Fast forward to the loudest part of the song until the lights bounce at 0.

Adjust the gain button so that the lights bounce at 0 on the bar meters.



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Stop the song and bring it back to the start of the song.

Switch off the PFL button.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk. The output should now be bouncing at 0 on the bar meters.

Pre Fade Listening a Mic Using Led Bar Meters

Find your mic fader.

Make sure it is down.

Press the PFL button in.

Speak into the mic / get the guest to speak into the mic.

Ask them to explain their journey to the studio.

Adjust the gain button so that the lights bounce at 0.

Switch off the PFL button.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk.

The output should now be bouncing at 0 on the bar meters.

Remember that all desks and studios are set up slightly differently. Use this as a starting guide only. Always confirm with your trainer what levels you should be broadcasting at.

To recap:

Make sure the fader is down.

Press the PFL in.

Set the levels to the loudest part of the source using the gain.

Switch the PFL off.

Open the fader to the correct part of the desk.

Congratulations! You made it! Now go forth and produce good quality radio!

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