

Jodie's SPOT Instructions

This is my effort to simplify/understand how SPOT works, and make it easier for folks in the riding community to fully use this tool.

(NOTE: This document currently describes the Original SPOT unit. SPOT (Gen2) will be released in November 2009. Shortly after that time, this document will be modified to include the improvements provided using the new unit.)

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SPOT Contact Information:

<http://www.findmespot.com> or call 1-866-OK1-SPOT (1-866-651-7768).

SPOT Trip Manager (STM) Contact Information:

<http://jasonjonas.org/spot/index.jsp>

Locating SPOT on Your Ride

The SPOT unit operates the best when it is located in a holder, on a shelf or in a tank bag. BUT it should be on a somewhat level plane, so it can take advantage of having SPOT signals received by one of the many Globalstar satellites.

If you do keep it in a tank bag:

- Do keep the unit so the buttons/signal lights are facing towards the sky.
- Do not cover the surface of the SPOT unit with a **metal** item such as a clipboard. Plastic, cloth, and paper do not seem to interfere with signal reception.
- Do make sure that your unit is not left out where someone (other than you) could press the 911 button. Apparently, there are additional charges for fake 911 reports, and no one needs the additional expense.

Things to Set Up BEFORE Using SPOT (Optional...but recommended)

- Bookmark the following page: <https://login.findmespot.com/spot-main-web/index.jsp>
This is the Login page for SPOT Owners. And it is “oh-so-cleverly *HIDDEN*” as part of the Activate Your SPOT Unit link on the main page –OR– under the SPOT Account tab, as Your SPOT Account. (DAMHIK...or had to find out!)
- After you Login on the SPOT page, the Messages tab will appear on the screen. You will want to click on the Message Profiles link and then click the Edit link to confirm/modify the list of people who will get your messages. Your contact person is able to receive either SMS or email messages from SPOT. These messages can be sent for OK, Tracking, Help or 911messages. (Personally, I have found it easier for friends to read the maps/information on Jason Jonas’s SPOT Trip Manager (info below)...so I do not send the OK or Tracking messages out to any one person. I only send the Help and 911 messages, and only if I send them.)
- Set up your login to Jason Jonas’s SPOT Trip Manager (STM)
<http://jasonjonas.org/spot/index.jsp>
The About and FAQ link (in the upper right corner) will take you to a page where you can get all your questions answered. Jason’s STM page allows you to send a link to others, so they can check your trip at any time using any browser. You can set up multiple trips (either containing or eliminating actual times), you can make it so you only view a short period of time or a multi day trip, and you can even download the trip info in KML format. There is an XML feed available from SPOT, replacing the original feed that used to be available through Yahoo Fire Eagle.

Please check out the following link on Jason’s site to properly set up your XML feed from SPOT: <http://jasonjonas.org/spot/about.jsp#spot-xml>

- Make sure you test this all out BEFORE the weekend where you first want to use your unit...as you might run into difficulties with the XML setup. (DAMHIK.)

To Turn On SPOT

- Press the ON/OFF button once and the light will blink GREEN every 3 seconds. Your SPOT unit is now on.
- Wait at least 2 seconds BEFORE pressing any other button.

If the ON/OFF Light is Red (Instead of Green)

- Your batteries are at 30% of life left and should be replaced soon with new Lithium batteries.

NOTE: According to SPOT, a SPOT unit with two fully-charged, AA Lithium batteries should exceed the following (under normal usage):

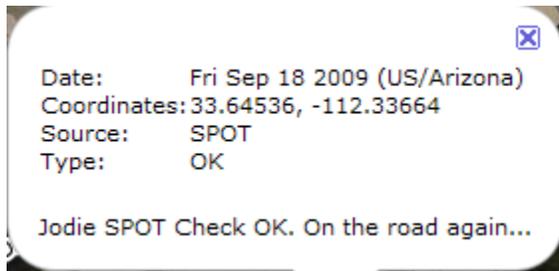
- Power ON, unused: Approx. 1 year
- SPOT Tracking mode: Approx. 14 days
- 9-1-1 mode: Up to 7 consecutive days
- HELP mode: Up to 1900 messages
- SPOT Tracking/OK: Up to 1900 messages

To Send an OK Message

- Make sure your SPOT unit is turned on. (ON/OFF Light will blink GREEN every 3 seconds)
NOTE: The unit must also be in view of the Southern sky (when using SPOT in the Northern Hemisphere of the world) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
- Press the OK button once and release (ON/OFF Light and OK Light will blink GREEN every 3 seconds).
- You will see an OK message appear on your SPOT page (shortly thereafter), similar to the one that follows.

Select	Time (America/Phoenix)	Messenger	Type	Latitude	Longitude
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 02:08:34 PM	jtlawrosky	OK	33.6454	-112.3366

- SPOT Trip Manager will display a GREEN flag with a number, like this  for any OK messages sent by your SPOT unit. You can click the flag and get a popup with detailed GPS coordinates for your location. The OK message you set up in SPOT (under Message Profiles) appears in this information, similar to the screen that follows:



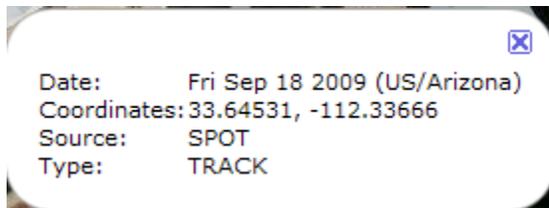
NOTE: If you want to turn on Tracking mode after pressing the OK button, you must cycle your SPOT unit. (Turn SPOT off and then back on, and then restart tracking.)

To Send Tracking Messages

- Make sure your SPOT unit is turned on. (ON/OFF Light will blink GREEN every 3 seconds)
NOTE: The unit must also be in view of the Southern sky (when using SPOT in the Northern Hemisphere of the world) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
- Press and hold the OK button and then release ***after*** the OK light turns off (this takes about 5 seconds). At that time, the ON/OFF Light and OK Light will then blink GREEN in unison every 3 seconds.
NOTE: If the lights aren't blinking in unison, then the SPOT unit is not able to send a GPS signal properly to the satellites. Make sure you are not blocking the unit in the direction of the Southern sky (when using SPOT in the Northern Hemisphere of the world) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
- You will see a Track message appear on your SPOT page, (shortly thereafter), similar to the one that follows. A message will be sent from your unit to the satellite roughly every 10 minutes. As you can see in the example that follows, some messages appeared every 10 minutes, and some did not appear. The unit tracked *in this example* was not moved from the location where it was placed, nor was it blocked from a Southern exposure at any time.

Select	Time (America/Phoenix)	Messenger	Type	Latitude	Longitude
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 05:45:50 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 05:35:32 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6453	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 05:25:30 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 05:16:09 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 05:05:26 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 04:35:32 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 04:25:26 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3365
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 03:55:27 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3365
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 03:48:39 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 03:25:55 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 03:15:30 PM	jtlawrosky	Track	33.6454	-112.3366

- SPOT Trip Manager will display an ORANGE flag with a number, like this  for any Tracking messages sent by your SPOT unit. You can click the flag and get a popup with detailed GPS coordinates for your location. Since the message comes through the XML interface, you'll see SPOT appears as the source, similar to the screen that follows:



NOTE: If you are traveling in a city (between tall buildings), or in dense tree overgrowth, or between some rock canyons, your messages may be blocked from getting to the satellites. If SPOT does not have a current link to the satellite system, the lights will begin to blink out of sync. Move to an area where the satellite can receive the readings and the lights will once again blink concurrently.

- Additionally, if you press ANY other button on the SPOT unit, (while tracking mode is turned on) then you must cycle your SPOT unit in order to restart tracking. (Turn SPOT off and then back on, to restart tracking.)

To Cancel a Tracking Message

- Press and hold the OK button for 5 seconds. The OK light will blink RED to indicate that you are cancelling the Tracking message. Then, the light will stay RED for 5 seconds, indicating the message has been sent.
- OR press any of the other buttons (OK, HELP, 911 or ON/OFF) where appropriate. OK, HELP, and 911 will result in the specific message being sent when held for at least 5 seconds. ON/OFF will turn off the unit completely.
- **REMEMBER**, if you want to go back to tracking mode after pressing the OK button, you must cycle your SPOT unit. (Turn SPOT off and then back on, and then restart tracking.)

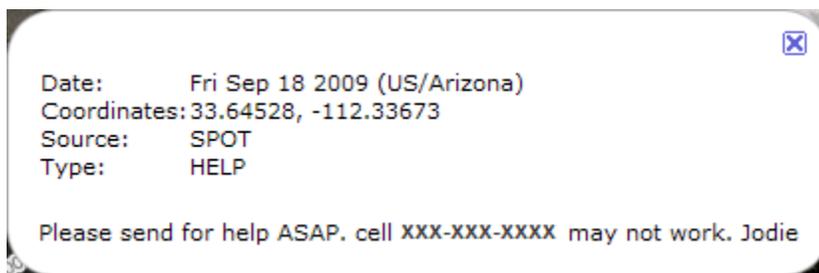
To Send a HELP Message

- Make sure your SPOT unit is turned on. (ON/OFF Light will blink GREEN every 3 seconds) The unit must also be in view of the Southern sky (when using SPOT in the Northern Hemisphere of the world) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
- Press and hold the Help button and then release after the Help light blinks GREEN (this takes about 3 seconds). At that time, the ON/OFF Light and Help Light will blink GREEN in unison every 3 seconds.
- You will see a Help message appear on your SPOT page, similar to the one that follows. If you have set up on your SPOT Shared pages to send a message to an email or a text message, then those will also be sent.

Select	Time (America/Phoenix)	Messenger	Type	Latitude	Longitude
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 02:24:08 PM	jtlawrosky	Help	33.6454	-112.3366

NOTE: The Help message will be sent to the friends you specified every 10 minutes for an hour, unless you cancel the HELP message.

- SPOT Trip Manager will display a RED flag with a number, like this  for any Help messages sent by your SPOT unit. You can click the flag and get a popup with detailed GPS coordinates for your location. The Help message you set up in SPOT (under Message Profiles) appears on this popup.



To Cancel a HELP Message

- Press and hold the HELP button for 5 seconds. The Help light will blink RED to indicate that you are cancelling the Help message. Then, the light will stay RED for 5 seconds, indicating the message has been sent. The following message will appear on the SPOT Shared Page.

Select	Time (America/Phoenix)	Messenger	Type	Latitude	Longitude
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/27/2009 02:58:52 PM	jtlawrosky	Help Cancel	No GPS	No GPS

- **REMEMBER**, if you want to go back to tracking mode after pressing the HELP button, you must cycle your SPOT unit. (Turn SPOT off and then back on, and then restart tracking.)

To Send a 911 Message

- Make sure your SPOT unit is turned on. (ON/OFF Light will blink GREEN every 3 seconds) The unit must also be in view of the Southern sky (when using SPOT in the Northern Hemisphere of the world) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
- Press and hold the 911 button and then release after the 911 light blinks GREEN (this takes about 5 seconds). At that time, the ON/OFF Light and 911 Light will blink GREEN in unison every 3 seconds.
- You will now see a 911 message appear on your SPOT page (sorry, I did not test this one, so no pretty picture).

NOTE: The 911 message will be sent to the GEOS Emergency Response folks every 5 minutes, until you cancel the 911 message.

- SPOT Trip Manager will display an ORANGE flag with a number, like this  for any 911 messages sent by your SPOT unit. You can click the flag and get a popup with detailed GPS coordinates for your location. Since there is no message set up in SPOT for a 911 message, only the GPS info appears on this popup. NOTE: I have not tested this feature (as I did not want to get billed for a “bogus 911 request”. The messages should appear as similar to the ones previously displayed.

To Cancel a 911 Message

- Press and hold the 911 button for at least 5 seconds. The 911 light will blink RED to indicate that you are cancelling the 911 message. Then, the light will stay RED for 5 seconds, indicating the message has been sent.
- **REMEMBER**, if you want to go back to tracking mode, after pressing the 911 button, you must cycle your SPOT unit. (Turn SPOT off and then back on, and then restart tracking.)

Additional Information Available Through SPOT

- SPOT has a multi-step training/operational video appearing at this link:
<http://www.findmespot.com/en/index.php?cid=1530>
- Link to map of SPOT Coverage around the world:
<http://www.findmespot.com/en/index.php?cid=1200>

Additional Information Available Through STM

- Jason Jonas's STM has a detailed FAQ appearing at this link:
<http://jasonjonas.org/spot/about.jsp>

Questions About Data Stored at SPOT Headquarters

- **Q:** How long does the information on a trip stay on the SPOT site?
A: It stays in your account for 30 days.
- **Q:** Is there a way to keep it longer?
A: Yes, you can create a spot adventure and it will be saved forever in your SPOT Adventures Account. Or, you can export it as a KML file into Google Earth and save it.
- **Q:** If after 30 days, a trip has been removed, is it possible to be recovered?
A: No. Once the information is deleted from SPOT, it is gone and cannot be accessed.
- **Q:** Say I track a trip. Then I delete the information on the SPOT site. Is it possible to recover that information?
A: No. Once the information is deleted from SPOT, it is gone and cannot be accessed.

Questions About Data Stored at STM

- **Q:** What SPOT messages does STM process and how do I get them in STM?
A: According to the STM FAQ:
"There are four essential SPOT message types - OK, Help, Tracking and 911. STM allows you to capture and store the location data associated with OK, Help, Tracking, and 911 messages. All of the messages: OK, Help, Tracking and 911 messages are now sent to STM through the XML interface.
- **Q:** What happens when I delete a trip?
A: Again, according to the STM FAQ:
"It's important to note that deleting a trip does not delete any location data. A location, once in STM, will always be in STM. "

"When you delete a trip, the trip goes away along with the view statistics for the trip. Once the trip is deleted, there is no way to undo it. However, since the locations/time data are never removed you can always create another trip with the same or similar date range."

Important Note

- If you have never used your SPOT before, make sure you turn it on and place it with a clear view of the Southern sky (if you are in the Northern Hemisphere) for at least 20 minutes. This allows the SPOT unit to sync up with the Satellites. If you are in the Southern Hemisphere (Australia, New Zealand, South America, and other countries South of the Equator) you must place the unit with a clear view of the Northern sky.
- ALSO, if you have turned off your SPOT unit, and have physically moved it over 600 miles BEFORE turning it on again, then you *MUST* turn it on and place it with a clear view of the Southern sky (if you are in the Northern Hemisphere) for at least 20 minutes. Again, if you are in the Southern Hemisphere (Australia, New Zealand, South America and other countries South of the Equator) you must place the unit with a clear view of the Northern sky.

Cheat Sheets for Using SPOT

Two summary sheets appear on the following pages for your use.

Activating SPOT Unit / Messages					
Action	Unit Status Before Action	Button to Push	Length of Time to Push Button	Lights On	Color of Lights When Working
Unit On	SPOT OFF	ON/OFF	1 second	ON/OFF only	Green
OK Message	SPOT ON	OK/V	1 second	ON/OFF and OK/V	Green (blinking in unison)
Tracking Message	SPOT OFF, then turn SPOT ON	OK/V	5 seconds, until OK/V turns OFF	ON/OFF and OK/V	Green (blinking in unison)
Help Message	SPOT ON	HELP	3 seconds	ON/OFF and HELP	Green (blinking in unison)
911 Message	SPOT ON	911	5 seconds	ON/OFF and 911	Green (blinking in unison)

Lights on SPOT Unit / Messages			
Lights On	Color of Lights	SPOT Status	Action to take
ON/OFF only	Green	SPOT is ON	None. SPOT is in Standby Mode.
ON/OFF only	Red	SPOT is ON and Battery life is 30% or less.	Replace the 2 Batteries with AA Lithium Batteries.
ON/OFF and OK/v	Green (in unison)	SPOT Tracking is ON.	None. SPOT is in Tracking Mode.
ON/OFF and OK/v	Green (Not in Unison)	SPOT Tracking is on, but the SPOT unit is unable to send messages to the satellites.	Move the SPOT unit to an area where it has an unobstructed view of the Southern sky. (Northern Hemisphere only) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
ON/OFF and OK/v	ON/OFF is Green, OK/v is Red	SPOT Tracking has been turned off.	To resume SPOT Tracking, turn the SPOT unit off, then on. Then turn on SPOT Tracking.
ON/OFF and HELP	Green (in unison)	SPOT HELP message is being sent for 1 hour (or until cancelled).	NOTE: Cancel HELP message, if no longer needed.
ON/OFF and HELP	Green (Not in Unison)	SPOT HELP Message is ready to be sent, but the SPOT unit is unable to send messages to the satellites.	Move the SPOT unit to an area where it has an unobstructed view of the Southern sky. (Northern Hemisphere only) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
ON/OFF and HELP	ON/OFF is Green, HELP is Red	SPOT HELP Message has been cancelled.	To resume SPOT Tracking, turn the SPOT unit off, then on. Then turn on SPOT Tracking.
ON/OFF and 911	Green (in unison)	SPOT 911 Message is being sent (until cancelled).	NOTE: Cancel 911 message, if emergency responders are on scene/no longer needed.
ON/OFF and 911	Green (Not in Unison)	SPOT 911 message is ready to be sent, but the SPOT unit is unable to send messages to the satellites.	Move the SPOT unit to an area where it has an unobstructed view of the Southern sky. (Northern Hemisphere) OR Northern sky (for countries in the Southern Hemisphere).
ON/OFF and 911	ON/OFF is Green, 911 is Red	SPOT 911 Message has been cancelled.	To resume SPOT Tracking, turn the SPOT unit off, then on. Then turn on SPOT Tracking.

Document Change Log

Revision	Month/Year	Updates to Document
1.1 – 1.4	06/2009	Initial Document Development
1.5	07/2009	Posted to Web, link set as http://tinyurl.com/spotinfo
1.6	09/2009	Updated to add info on XML interface, remove Yahoo Fire Eagle references, and refer to both Northern/Southern Hemisphere countries.