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July 23, 2000 DK9SQ Mast

A few tips for using your new DK9SQ Mast. First - Be safe! Even though it is fiberglass, be careful where you erect the mast. Watch out for electrical power lines above! Do not leave it unattended, and take it down if thunderstorms or high winds are approaching. Second - the mast is breakable. It will break if it is stepped on or abused. Third - do not extend the mast horizontally and attach an antenna to the top and then try to stand it up. It is possible the mast will fracture (if overloaded) at the high stress point (your hand pushing up!) and you will have a handful of fiberglass splinters! The safest way to extend the mast is vertically as described below.

To extend the mast:

1. Remove the mast from the protective cloth bag. The bottom end has a screw-on cap, while the top end has a removable rubber plug.
2. Remove the rubber plug from the top end. Hold your hand over the end and tip the mast so that the internal sections come out into your hand.
3. Hold on to the thinnest one (the center one) and stand the mast vertically so that the large end rests on the ground.
4. Pull the small section vertically out of the mast until the next section begins to come out.
5. Hold the second section in one hand, pull the top section up and twist at the same time. This pulling and twisting will lock the two sections in place. You can twist either way - the friction will hold the sections in place.
6. Repeat for all sections of the mast until the mast is fully extended.
7. Fasten the mast to a support at a point on the mast 4 feet or higher. The bottom should also be secured so that it will not slide and result in the mast falling over.

To take the mast down:

1. Reverse the above procedure beginning with the two largest (bottom two) sections. Grasp one in each hand, twist, and push together.

Supports:

The bottom can be tied to a post, stake, set in a hole in the ground, etc. The screw-on cap can be removed and the mast set over the top of a stake - but don't expect a single small internal stake to hold the mast up on it's own. The guy point on the mast should be at least 4 feet up. The mast can be tied to something like a tall fence post, mirror bracket or other solid support. I have used a bungee cord around a fence post, the mirror bracket on a van, the trunk lid on a mini-van, and a 2x4 tied to the roof rack of my car.

I have also found that long periods of wind can cause the joints to loosen and the mast will collapse in on itself. A small piece of tape across each of the 4 lowest joints will keep this from happening. Do not drill holes in the mast to pin it up!