

Comark Customer Service Support Guide

Introduction

This document provides important information for Comark Communications customers seeking to obtain technical assistance or to order parts for their Comark, Thomson, Thomcast, or RCA transmission or multimedia processing products.

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I. Contacting Comark

24-Hour Telephone Support

Technical customer assistance is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at the following toll-free number:

1-800-345-9295

During normal business hours, your call will be answered by a technician or receptionist and routed to the appropriate person. During non-business hours, you will be invited to leave a brief message describing the nature of your problem, and a technician will be paged. The technician will return your call as soon as possible -- typically within fifteen minutes, *but subject to limitations imposed by certain service plans in the case of MPEG processing and test equipment customers.*

We strongly encourage our customers to limit their after-hour calls to emergency situations involving significant service interruptions (i.e. "off-air" emergencies). For routine parts orders or messages, we invite you to use our **RapidPART** or **CS Feedback** mailboxes, as discussed below.

NOTE: In the interest of receiving prompt attention to your requests, it is imperative that you dial the (800) number so that your calls may be properly routed within the Comark organization. In the past, customers have often relied upon calling customer service representatives at their direct extension number. While customers may still call customer service representatives in response to a particular issue already being processed, they should refrain from doing so to report a new problem or to initiate a new parts order. A “cold-call” message left in the personal voice mailbox of a specific customer service representative may go unanswered for days or even weeks, should that person be absent due to illness, vacation, or possibly a field assignment.

The Comark Customer Service fax number is **413-998-1197**.

RapidPART Mailbox

If you need to order parts and already know the quantities and part numbers required, you may send us an e-mail at swikrapidpart@comarktv.com or simply click on the RapidPART icon below. A customer service representative will contact you with price and delivery information, for out-of-warranty items, or ship your part immediately, for in-warranty parts. Be sure to indicate your name, company, ship-to address, telephone number, e-mail address, part numbers, quantities, and required shipping priority in your e-mail message. If you wish to purchase parts and already know their price, be sure to include a purchase order number, also.

Requests must be received prior to 3:00 PM Eastern US time to ensure shipment on same day (when applicable).



NOTE: The RapidPART mailbox is especially useful for communicating routine parts requests in the middle of the night. You no longer need to stay awake until the start of the next business day to phone in your request. If a different person will serve as your contact the following day, be sure to include that person's contact information in your message.

CS Feedback Mailbox

For other general comments concerning Comark Communications customer service or non-urgent requests, you are invited to send us an e-mail at swikcsfeedback@comarktv.com

RCA Support

If you require support for RCA products, you may dial the RCA direct line at **1-800-363-4065**.

MPEG vs. Transmitter Support

Comark Communications USA (Southwick MA) provides customer support for two major product types: MPEG processing/test products and transmitter products. Some examples of MPEG processing and test equipment are Comark Amber, Pearl, Sapphire, Opal, Turquoise, and resale equipment manufactured by Harmonic, Dolby, and Evertz. Some examples of transmitter products are Comark IOX, DCX, Affinity, Advantage, Optimum, Ultimate. Certain portions of this guide are applicable exclusively to one equipment type. These cases are clearly labeled. Unless otherwise specified, the material contained in this guide applies universally to all equipment supported by Comark

Fee structure: *MPEG processing and test products*

Phone support is provided free of charge during normal business hours during the first year of the warranty period for a given piece of equipment. Phone support is also provided free of charge for equipment covered by the Comark Silver, Gold, or Platinum Service Plans. The levels of support provided for each service plan are outlined in Table 1 on the following page.

MPEG phone support does not include initial installation and configuration of equipment. The customer service phone support offered by Comark is limited to questions or problems dealing with equipment that has already been commissioned and is/was in regular service. Comark sells installation for its MPEG processing products as a separate service. Comark will not, as a general policy, provide free warranty phone support for those parties who have forgone the Comark installation and are having difficulties configuring the equipment themselves. Phone support in these circumstances may be purchased at the \$100/hour rate and subject to same conditions described later in this guide.

Attributes	Standard Warranty	Comark P-1 Silver Service	Comark P-2 Gold Service	Comark P-3 Platinum Service
Equipment Covered	All Comark equipment and software purchased from Comark and owned and operated by customer, as specified by contract warranty.	Equipment and software purchased from Comark and owned and operated by customer, as specified by Service Agreement.	Equipment and software purchased from Comark and owned and operated by customer, as specified by Service Agreement.	Equipment and software purchased from Comark and owned and operated by customer, as specified by Service Agreement.
Technical Support	8:00- 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time - First Year Paid support otherwise	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time Paid support otherwise	24 x 7 x 365 / 1 Hr Response	24 x 7 x 365 / 1 Hr Response
On-Site Support	Available at Comark Standard Time and Material Rates. Response on "as available" basis. PO required for dispatch.	Available during work week at Comark Standard Time and Material Rates within 72 Hours. PO required for dispatch	Available 7x24x365 - within 72 Hours - Upon mutual agreement - travel costs paid by customer - Emergencies have priority response	Available 7x24x365 - within 48 Hours - Upon mutual agreement - travel costs paid by customer - Emergencies have priority response
Assembly Exchange	Best efforts as product is available Customer pays for shipping to and from Comark.	Within 5 Business Days from time of issuance of RMA. Additional 2 days if customer specific configuration must be loaded. Comark pays for shipping to Customer.	Within 2 Business Days from time of issuance of RMA. Additional 2 days if customer specific configuration must be loaded. Comark pays for shipping to Customer.	Within 1 Business Day from time of issuance of RMA. Additional 2 days if customer specific configuration must be loaded. Comark pays for shipping to Customer
Tech-Help E-mail	Included	Included	Included	Included
Product Upgrades	Software maintenance releases included Major software upgrades not included	Software maintenance releases included Major software upgrades not included	Software maintenance releases included Major software upgrades not included	Software maintenance releases included Major software upgrades not included
Term	1 Year on Hardware 90 Days on Software	1, 2 or 3 Years – Renewable	1, 2 or 3 Years – Renewable	1, 2 or 3 Years – Renewable

Table 1- Service Plans for MPEG Processing and Test Equipment

The Service Plans described above are available when the product is originally purchased or prior to the expiration of the original warranty period or service plan. Special consideration must be made for other circumstances. Service plans may not be purchased retroactively once a unit has failed.

After-hours phone support or phone/e-mail support for equipment no longer in warranty may be purchased at a rate of \$100/hour on an as-needed basis. Depending on the customer credit history with Comark, a purchase order or credit card number may be required in advance at the start of the call. Billing will be in 1/10th hour increments with a one-hour minimum charge per

incident. A service incident is defined for this purpose as a series of phone calls or e-mails exchanges dealing with a single, specific customer problem. Invoicing will occur upon problem resolution or at the end of the calendar month in which the contacts occurred.

Minor software upgrades, such as those designed to provide minor bug fixes or workarounds, are provided free of charge and on an "as-compatible" basis for equipment covered by the original warranty or the Silver, Gold, or Platinum Service Plans. No software updates are provided for out of warranty equipment.

Major software upgrades, such as those that result in a significant change in product functionality, are offered on a paid basis only. The cost of a particular upgrade shall be determined by the degree to which the product feature set changes. Contact Comark Customer Service to determine the availability, compatibility, and price of any major software upgrades.

Generally speaking, any software change that results in a change in the software revision number (i.e. v2.01 becomes v2.02) shall be considered a major upgrade; however, Comark reserves the right to make the final distinction between *major* and *minor* software upgrades.

Fee structure: *transmitter products*

Transmitter phone and e-mail support is provided free of charge for both in warranty and out of warranty customers at the present time.

International customer support

Comark Communications USA (Southwick MA) provides IOT transmitter customer support for the entire world, as well as MPEG processing and solid-state transmitter support in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. All Customer Service policies and programs spelled out in this document apply equally to these customers. Comark maintains technical persons on staff capable of speaking French and Spanish during normal business hours (8 am - 5 pm Eastern USA time). Comark invites our international customers to contact our 24-hour technical support at +1-413-998-1100 and select the customer service option when prompted. (The 1-800-345-9295 customer service support line given elsewhere in this guide cannot be reached outside the United States).

While Comark invites our international customers to contact us directly for technical support questions, all parts requests and billing should be routed through the appropriate Comark in-country representative, unless the representative has specifically requested otherwise. An international customer calling for parts shipments may request these parts directly, but the shipping and billing will occur via their local Comark representative, unless an alternate arrangement exists.

Refusal of customer support

Comark reserves the right to refuse phone or e-mail support to any individual should any of the following conditions become apparent:

1. Individual does not have adequate technical training such that their actions may represent a danger to themselves or to others.
2. Customer has stated his/her intention to perform actions that may cause damage to equipment or personal injury to themselves or others. In this case, Comark will provide the recommended course of action, but will not facilitate dangerous conduct proposed by the individual.
3. Customer has not made a good faith effort to familiarize himself/herself with the product, its manual(s), and all applicable service bulletins in the months leading up to the present problem.
4. Customer does not have adequate test equipment to perform the tests required and no alternate procedure exists.
5. Customer becomes hostile or verbally abusive toward Comark personnel.

II. Product Warranty

The terms and conditions of the product warranty are spelled out in the original equipment purchase agreement (contract). However, Comark Customer Service would like to highlight the following items:

1. Shipping charges for replacement parts are not covered under warranty unless specifically indicated in the original purchase agreement.
2. Comark warranty excludes damage due to Acts of God such as flood, fire, and most specifically lightning strikes or other electrical disturbances. It is the customer's responsibility to install a proper grounding and surge suppression protection to minimize the risk of such damage.
3. No labor of any kind is covered under warranty. This includes both Comark field service labor or labor by customer personnel to rectify a problem arising during the warranty period, with the single exception of *warranty field service* listed immediately below:

Warranty field service

In certain, limited cases, when it appears that Comark-supplied equipment may be suffering from a significant problem due to improper installation by Comark field personnel or a manufacturing defect that should have been rectified by Comark manufacturing personnel, Comark may, at the customer's specific request and its own discretion, offer to provide a free field service visit to investigate and resolve the problem. The decision to offer such a visit rests

with the Manager or Director of Customer Service or Field Operations at Comark. No assumptions should be made as to the warranty status of a field service visit unless it has been specifically indicated as a potential warranty visit by the person(s) listed above. Before such a visit may take place, certain minimum standards as to site accessibility, safety, and work environment must be met, as set forth in Service Bulletin 040217 available at the following address: <http://www.comarktv.com>.

If, upon the visit and subsequent resolution of the problem by a Comark field service representative, the problem is revealed to be due to any the following causes:

1. Failure to properly maintain, adjust, or configure the equipment on the customer's part
2. Failure of a third-party piece of equipment
3. Act of God such as flood, fire, lightning strike, or AC mains disturbance
4. A trivial problem such that the proper solution would have been readily apparent to a person with proper technical training and test equipment

...the field visit shall be considered non-warranty and shall be billed according to the terms and conditions set forth in Service Bulletin 040217.

This offer of warranty field service applies exclusively to the first year of normal operation of the equipment by the customer. After this period, all field service visits are billable, regardless of cause.

Software compatibility

Certain Comark equipments make use of third-party software products, such as operating systems or other software applications. These third party products are often in a state of constant evolution, with new revisions, patches, and updates being released at frequent intervals. Comark products are guaranteed to be compatible with the revision level of any third-party software products with which they originally shipped. While Comark will maintain a good faith effort to ensure that its products will be compatible with future revisions of third-party software products, it has no legal responsibility to do so unless specifically indicated in certain premium service plans or warranties.

Customers installing third-party patches and updates to the computer equipment on which Comark products operate do so at their own risk. While the probability of a serious software conflict developing as a result of a patch or update is quite small, Comark bears no responsibility for the elimination of this conflict. In extreme cases, it may be necessary to reverse the update or purchase a software upgrade to a more recent revision level from Comark.

Additional notices to transmitter customers

The warranty offered by Comark Communications does not cover consumable items such as IOTs, thyratrons, or triggered spark gaps. Warranty claims resulting from the premature failure of these devices must be addressed to their manufacturer.

Comark is not responsible for any damage to an IOT, its associated circuits, or any other equipment due to a malfunctioning crowbar protection circuit. The thyratrons (or triggered spark gaps) used in the crowbar assembly must be tested at regular intervals to ensure their proper operation. Please consult Service Bulletin 990611 for more information on regular testing of the thyatron crowbar assembly.

Comark is not responsible for any damage to person or property due to the improper functioning of an interlock protection circuit. The customer is responsible for verifying the proper operation of all interlock test circuits at regular intervals as part of a regular maintenance program.

Comark is not responsible for any damage to Comark or third party equipment resulting from a cooling system leak in a liquid cooled transmitter. The customer is responsible for inspecting the cooling system, maintaining the cooling system in proper working order, and judging the soundness of all mechanical cooling system connections from the date of commissioning forward.

III. Ordering Replacement Parts

MPEG processing and test equipment**Quick Exchange Program**

Comark offers assembly exchange for defective MPEG processing and test equipment as part of the Quick Exchange program. Under the terms of the Quick Exchange program, Comark provides a new or refurbished permanent replacement part of equal or better quality than the original defective unit. The cost and level of support provided varies according to the warranty status of the equipment in question:

Under Standard Warranty (unless superceded by a premium service plan)

Free replacement of defective unit. Customer pays for shipping unless other stated in original purchase agreement.

Expedited shipment available as per out of warranty terms below.

Silver Service Plan

Free replacement within five business days from date of RMA issuance.

Additional two days if customer specific configuration must be loaded.

Comark pays for shipping to customer.

Expedited shipment available as per out of warranty terms below.

Gold Service Plan

Free replacement within two business days from date of RMA issuance.

Additional two days if customer specific configuration must be loaded.

Comark pays for shipping to customer.

Platinum Service Plan

Free replacement within one business day from date of RMA issuance.

Additional two days if customer specific configuration must be loaded.

Comark pays for shipping to customer.

Out of Warranty

For out of warranty units, the following price and delivery schedule applies:

Standalone Comark Products (Amber, Turquoise, Gypsum, Amethyst)

\$2600 for replacement within thirty days.

\$3800 for expedited replacement within 48 hours (72 hours on weekend)

PC-based Comark Products (Pearl, Opal, Topaz, Jade, Sapphire)

\$3975 for replacement within thirty days.

\$5175 for expedited replacement within 48 hours (72 hours on weekend)

Third Party Vendor Items (Harmonic, Sencore, others)

Prices and terms for advanced replacement are those published by original equipment manufacturer.

Special Circumstances (all service plans and warranty status)

In cases of particularly severe damage, such as that caused by water, fire, lightning, or such that the unit requires replacement of material components equal to greater than 50% of the original unit material cost, Comark reserves the right to assess additional repair charges up to and including 100% of the unit price (i.e. unit is totaled). Comark shall provide notification of any additional charges once the damaged unit has been evaluated by Comark repair personnel. Documentation supporting these additional claims shall be provided by Comark.

All requests for assembly exchanges and part replacements must be received by **2:00 p.m. EST/EDT** or they will be considered as being placed the following day. Any delay in delivering parts or product as a result of delivery to destinations outside the United States and/or

imports/customs related issues shall extend Comark period of performance by an equal amount of time.

Failure to return a defective unit within thirty days of the shipment of the replacement unit from Comark will result in an invoice for the full price of the replacement unit.

Time and material repair

Comark does not offer time and material repair of MPEG processing and test equipment.

Transmitter products

Quick Exchange Program

Major subassemblies for transmitter products are available for immediate replacement via the Quick Exchange program. Under the terms of the Quick Exchange program, a permanent replacement unit is shipped immediately, and an invoice for 100% of the new or refurbished price of the unit is issued. When the defective unit is received by Comark, a credit of either 100% (for in warranty equipment) or 25% (for out of warranty equipment) is applied to the original invoice. To receive credit, Comark must receive the defective unit by within thirty days of the shipment of the replacement unit from Comark.

All requests for assembly exchanges and part replacements must be received by **3:00 p.m. EST/EDT** or they will be considered as being placed the following day.

Time and material repair

For those customers who desire that their particular unit be repaired and returned to them, Comark will accept parts for repair on a time and material basis. Customers should contact Comark customer service for an RMA number before sending their unit in for repair. Please note that not all units are repaired by Comark, especially those units with a replacement value of less than \$1000. The nominal hourly rate for repair is \$250.00/hour. Comark offers a two-month turnaround guarantee for repairs. If part sent to Comark for repair is not ready for return to the sender after two calendar months, Comark will send a replacement refurbished unit to the customer in its place and keep the original damaged unit. The customer is billed the cost of the repair when the damaged unit is ultimately repaired.

Amplifier and Power Supply Assemblies for Solid-State Transmitters

Quick Exchange Program

Amplifier and Power Supply assemblies used in the Ultimate and Optimum solid-state transmitter products are available for replacement (if stock is available) via the Quick Exchange program. Under the terms of the solid-state Quick Exchange program, two program choices are available for the customer:

1. A permanent replacement unit is shipped immediately, and an invoice for the new or refurbished price of the unit is issued. When the defective unit is received by Comark, a credit of either the full amount for in-warranty equipment, or a percentage for out-of-warranty equipment, is applied to the original invoice. The net repair cost for an amplifier is currently \$1,695.00. The net repair cost for a power supply is currently \$2,190.00. To receive credit, Comark must receive the defective unit within thirty days of the shipment of the replacement unit from Comark, and the returned unit must be in repairable condition and properly packaged.
2. The customer returns the defective device to Comark (see the **Shipping parts back to Comark** paragraph below). Upon receipt of the assembly, Comark will send a permanent replacement unit. The customer will then be invoiced for the net repair costs above. This will save the customer from issuing a purchase order for the much higher new or refurbished cost.

All requests for assembly exchanges and part replacements must be received by **3:00 p.m. EST/EDT** or they will be considered as being placed the following day.

All product types

Replacement part warranty

All repaired and quick exchange parts have a warranty period of the longer of 90 days from date of shipment from Comark or the warranty period specified in the original purchase agreement. Freight charges will also be refunded for any parts that prove to be defective within the 90-day period.

Shipping parts back to Comark

All parts shipped to Comark must be accompanied by a valid Comark Returned Material Authorization (RMA) number. RMA numbers are available from Comark customer service and should be prominently labeled on the packaging of the equipment to be returned. Failure to include an RMA number on packages sent to Comark will result in needless delays in processing.

To minimize the risk of shipping damage, Comark strongly encourages the retention and re-use of the original shipping cartons for each major piece of equipment. However, in certain circumstances, wear and tear can render even original shipment cartons inadequate. You are the final arbiter as to the suitability of any shipping containers and/or methods used by any

subcontractors used to package/ship a unit to be returned to Comark. Replacement shipment cartons are available for purchase from Comark for the Optimum/Ultimate power supply (608961-01), and Optimum/Ultimate power amplifier (608960-01).

CAUTION: Prior to returning an ADAPT exciter assembly to customer service for repair, carefully remove each plug-in module from the exciter frame and package individually. Do not ship the exciter with the plug-in modules connected. Doing so will result in damage.

Comark is not responsible for any shipping damage occurring while a unit is being returned to Comark. You will be billed for the repair of any damage incurred during shipping. If the damage appears to be the fault of the freight forwarding company, it is your responsibility to submit to that company any claim for damages.

Return of PC-based products.

All PC-based products (i.e. all PCs) being returned to Comark for repair or exchange must be returned with all cables, dongles, manuals, software media, and software license certificates/stickers with which they originally arrived. Failure to include these items seriously hampers the ability of Comark to either repair or refurbish these units. Comark reserves the right to charge customers for any of the aforementioned items not included with a returning PC.

Loaner equipment

Comark does not offer loaner equipment to replace malfunctioning units during the repair process, except in certain, very limited, circumstances. These circumstances are almost exclusively limited to particularly rare units for which the Quick Exchange program is not available and paid repair is the only option. In these cases, loaner equipment will be made available by Comark Customer Service at the monthly rate of 20% of the purchase price for the first month and 10% of the purchase price for each month thereafter. A Comark customer service representative will indicate if these conditions apply when the RMA number is issued for the repair of the defective component.

Restocking fees

All unused parts returned to Comark are subject to a 25% restocking fee, if in perfect working condition, or 25% + repair costs, if in a non-working condition.

IV. Your Responsibilities as a Customer

You will obtain the maximum benefit from Comark Customer Service if you fully know and understand your responsibilities before attempting to contact us. Listed below are some of your responsibilities as a customer. Read this section carefully.

Read all technical documentation...

You are responsible for reading and fully understanding any and all manuals and service bulletins relating to a product before attempting to contact Comark customer service. You are responsible for maintaining printed copies of all pertinent technical documentation in close proximity to the equipment in question at all times. If you have lost your original manuals or would like to order additional copies, contact Comark customer service at 1-800-345-9295. All service bulletins are available free of charge at <http://www.comarktv.com>.

Maintain proper test equipment...

You are expected to have a complete complement of working test equipment. Consult Service Bulletins 030626 and 040824 for more information on test equipment recommendations. When contacted to offer an opinion on a given technical problem, Comark customer service will recommend the tests it feels are appropriate to diagnose the problem. You are solely responsible for any additional downtime, lost revenue, or frustration that may result from the inability to conduct the indicated tests due to a lack of functioning test equipment. If you do not have the appropriate test equipment, it is your responsibility to borrow or rent it from a third party or contract outside engineering help already in possession of the correct equipment. Comark does not loan test equipment, with two notable exceptions:

1. Test equipment to be used on-site by a Comark field service representative to take the place of absent or malfunctioning customer equipment will result in a charge of \$100 per piece per day, as per the terms and conditions set forth in Service Bulletin 040217.
2. Comark rents high voltage test sets (hipotter) for testing high voltage standoff capabilities in IOT transmitters for \$100/day as described in Service Bulletin 030614 and per the terms and conditions set forth in Document 040406.

Have reasonable expectations of phone support...

Just as you wouldn't call Ford Motor Co. in Detroit and expect them to diagnose your car's problem based on the description, "It goes clunk-clunk," it is unreasonable to expect a Comark representative to provide an ironclad solution to all of your problems over the phone. Comark does not have the final responsibility to troubleshoot and resolve your technical problem over the phone -- you do. Comark is only providing *phone assistance*. Comark bears final responsibility for problem resolution only when a Comark field representative is addressing the problem on-site.

Comark personnel are available to perform on-site services. Consult Service Bulletin 040217 for more details.

Implement all recommendations at your own risk...

You are the final arbiter of the soundness of any recommendations or procedures suggested by Comark. It is assumed that you have the technical training and experience required to understand the underlying rationale and potential ramifications of any recommendations issued by Comark. If you do not fully understand what is being advised, please ask the customer service representative to explain in greater detail. If you still do not understand the explanation, it is possible that additional technical expertise may be required on site. It is your responsibility to fully understand the possible consequences of your actions before proceeding to work on any piece of Comark or Comark-supplied equipment.

On occasion, a Comark customer service representative may offer an opinion as to the origin of a problem or suggest the replacement of a certain part. You are the final arbiter as to the soundness of this advice. All unused parts returned to Comark are subject to a 25% restocking fee, if in perfect working condition, or 25% + repair costs, if in non-working condition, regardless of whether they were ordered on the advice of a Comark customer service representative.

NOTE: Your relationship with Comark customer service is supposed to be one of technical equals. When you call Comark Customer Service, you are soliciting a second opinion to reinforce your own independent opinion derived from your own technical expertise and a careful and thorough examination of the facts already known.

Obtain and provide a purchase order when ordering parts...

All organizations are different. If yours is such that a written purchase order or purchase order number is required for all items purchased from an outside vendor, it is your responsibility to obtain this number and provide it to the Comark customer service representative at the time of purchase. When no purchase order is provided, a default PO number of "verbal (your name)" will be attached to all invoices.

Specify any applicable discounts or special terms...

The standard warranty offered by Comark generally requires the customer to pay shipping costs. If your organization has negotiated any special payment or shipping terms with Comark, it is your responsibility to mention these items while on the phone with the Comark customer service representative. No refunds or rebates will be applied retroactively for failures to apply a discount due to omissions on your part.