



**LC Series  
Transmitter Module  
Data Guide**

**Wireless made simple<sup>®</sup>**



**Warning:** Some customers may want Linx radio frequency (“RF”) products to control machinery or devices remotely, including machinery or devices that can cause death, bodily injuries, and/or property damage if improperly or inadvertently triggered, particularly in industrial settings or other applications implicating life-safety concerns (“Life and Property Safety Situations”).

**NO OEM LINX REMOTE CONTROL OR FUNCTION MODULE SHOULD EVER BE USED IN LIFE AND PROPERTY SAFETY SITUATIONS.** No OEM Linx Remote Control or Function Module should be modified for Life and Property Safety Situations. Such modification cannot provide sufficient safety and will void the product’s regulatory certification and warranty.

Customers may use our (non-Function) Modules, Antenna and Connectors as part of other systems in Life Safety Situations, but only with necessary and industry appropriate redundancies and in compliance with applicable safety standards, including without limitation, ANSI and NFPA standards. It is solely the responsibility of any Linx customer who uses one or more of these products to incorporate appropriate redundancies and safety standards for the Life and Property Safety Situation application.

**Do not use this or any Linx product to trigger an action directly from the data line or RSSI lines without a protocol or encoder/decoder to validate the data.** Without validation, any signal from another unrelated transmitter in the environment received by the module could inadvertently trigger the action.

**All RF products are susceptible to RF interference that can prevent communication.** RF products without frequency agility or hopping implemented are more subject to interference. This module does not have a frequency hopping protocol built in.

**Do not use any Linx product over the limits in this data guide.** Excessive voltage or extended operation at the maximum voltage could cause product failure. Exceeding the reflow temperature profile could cause product failure which is not immediately evident.

**Do not make any physical or electrical modifications to any Linx product.** This will void the warranty and regulatory and UL certifications and may cause product failure which is not immediately evident.



## Ordering Information

Ordering Information	
Part Number	Description
TXM-315-LC	315MHz Transmitter
TXM-418-LC	418MHz Transmitter
TXM-433-LC	433MHz Transmitter
EVAL-***-LC	LC Series Basic Evaluation Kit

\*\*\* = 315, 418 (Standard), 433MHz  
Transmitters are supplied in tubes of 50 pcs.

Figure 2: Ordering Information

## Absolute Maximum Ratings

Absolute Maximum Ratings				
Supply Voltage $V_{cc}$	-0.3	to	+6.0	VDC
Any Input or Output Pin	-0.3	to	$V_{cc}$	VDC
Operating Temperature	-30	to	+70	°C
Storage Temperature	-45	to	+85	°C
Soldering Temperature	+260°C for 10 seconds			

Exceeding any of the limits of this section may lead to permanent damage to the device. Furthermore, extended operation at these maximum ratings may reduce the life of this device.

Figure 3: Absolute Maximum Ratings



**Warning:** This product incorporates numerous static-sensitive components. Always wear an ESD wrist strap and observe proper ESD handling procedures when working with this device. Failure to observe this precaution may result in module damage or failure.

# Typical Performance Graphs

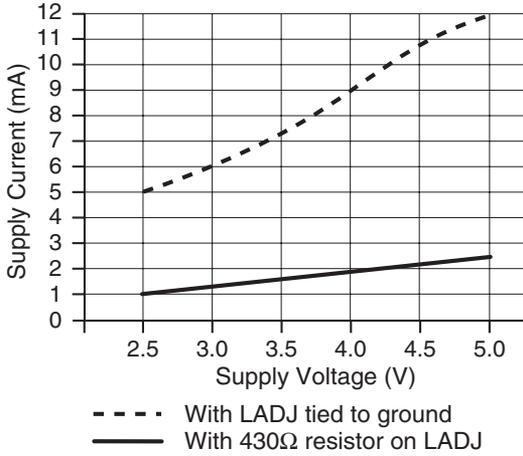


Figure 5: Current vs. Supply Voltage

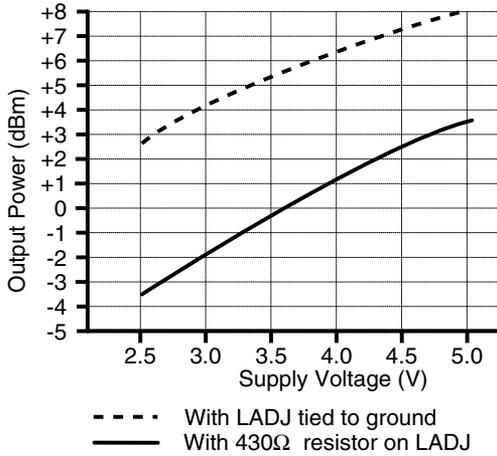


Figure 6: Output Power vs. Supply Voltage

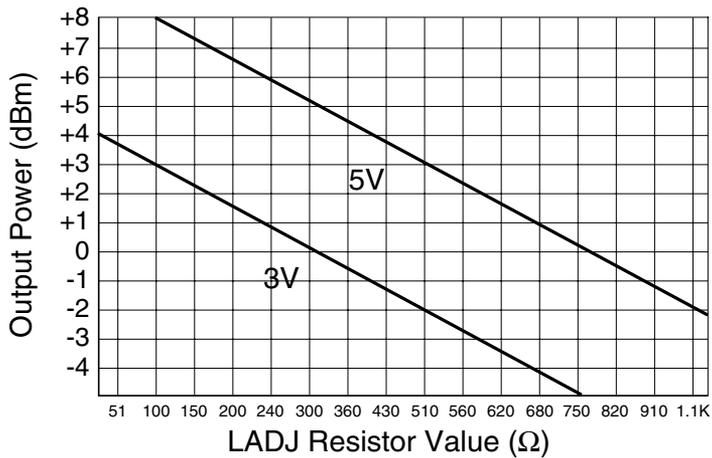


Figure 9: Output Power vs. LADJ Resistor

## Module Description

The LC Series transmitter is a low-cost, high-performance Surface Acoustic Wave (SAW) based Carrier-Present Carrier-Absent (CPCA) transmitter capable of sending serial data at up to 5,000bps. The LC's compact surface-mount package integrates easily into existing designs and is equally friendly to prototype and volume production. Its ultra-low power consumption makes it ideally suited for battery-powered products.

The transmitter's output power varies with supply voltage, but it is capable of outputting +10dBm into a 50-ohm load. When combined with an LR Series receiver, a reliable serial link is formed capable of transferring data over line-of-site distances of up to 1.5 miles (2,500m) when used with good antennas. Legal regulations in the various countries will require the transmitter output power to be reduced which will reduce range. Following the legal output limit for transmitters in the United States, systems based on the LC Series transmitter and LR Series receiver can achieve ranges of up to 3,000 feet (1,000m).

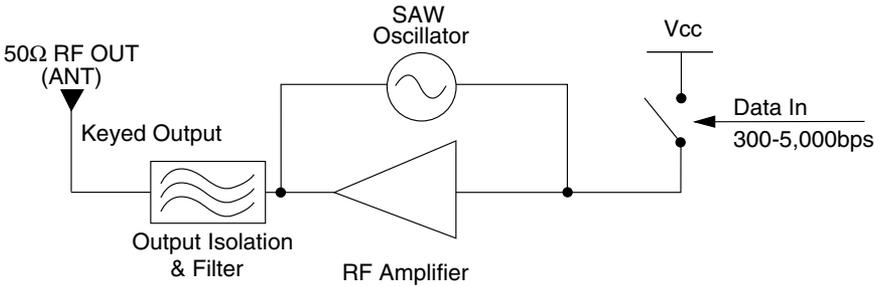


Figure 12: LC Series Transmitter Block Diagram

## Adjusting the Output Power

Depending on the type of antenna being used and the duty cycle of the data, the output power of the LC Series transmitter module may be higher than FCC regulations allow. The output power of the module is intentionally set high to compensate for losses resulting from inefficient antennas that may be used to realize cost or space savings. Since attenuation is often required, it is generally wise to provide for its implementation and allow the FCC test lab to easily attenuate the transmitter to the maximum legal limit for your product.

Two methods of attenuation are available using the LC Series transmitter module. First, a resistor may be placed between Pin 4 (LADJ) and ground to achieve up to a 7dB reduction in output power. The resistor value is easily determined from Figure 9 on page 6. Do not exceed the resistance values shown as transmitter instability may result. This method can also be used to reduce the transmission range and power consumption.

Another method commonly used to achieve attenuation, particularly at higher levels, is the use of a T-pad attenuator. A T-pad is a network of three resistors that allows for variable attenuation while maintaining the correct match to the antenna. It is usually prudent to allow space for the addition of a T-pad. An example of a T-pad attenuator layout is shown in Figure 14. For further details on T-pad attenuators, please refer to Application Note AN-00150.

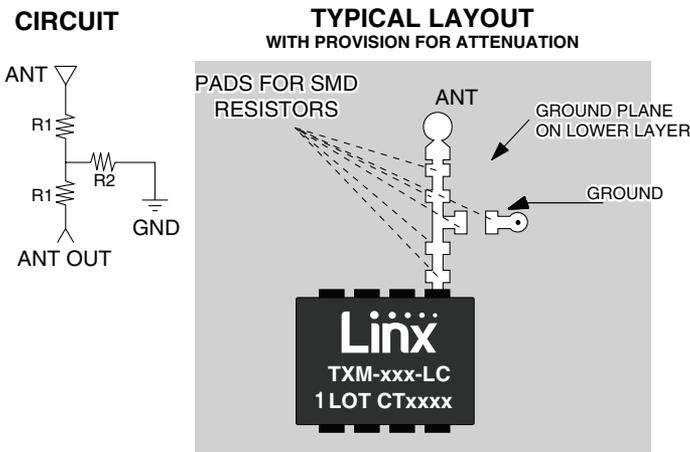


Figure 14: A T-Pad Attenuator Layout Example

## Power Supply Requirements

The module does not have an internal voltage regulator; therefore it requires a clean, well-regulated power source. While it is preferable to power the unit from a battery, the unit can also be operated from a power supply as long as noise is less than 20mV. Power supply noise can significantly affect the transmitter modulation; therefore, providing a clean power supply for the module should be a high design priority.

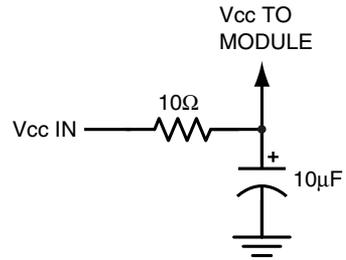


Figure 15: Supply Filter

A 10-ohm resistor in series with the supply followed by a 10μF tantalum capacitor from VCC to ground will help in cases where the quality of supply power is poor. These values may need to be adjusted depending on the noise present on the supply line.

## Typical Applications

The LC Series transmitter is ideal for the transmission of remote control / command data. One of the easiest way to transmit on / off data or switch closures is to use an encoder and decoder. These ICs provide a number of data lines that can be connected to switches or buttons or even a microcontroller. When a line is taken high on the encoder, a corresponding line goes high on the decoder as long as the address matches. Figure 16 shows an example using the Linx MS Series encoder.

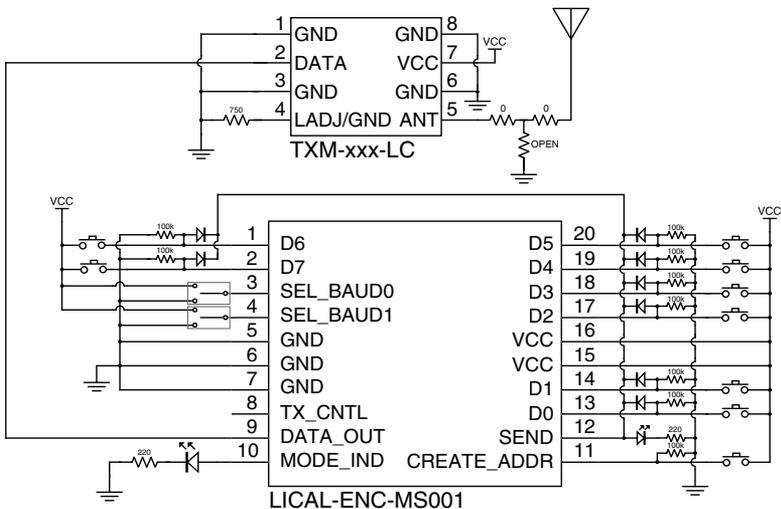


Figure 16: LC Series Transmitter and MS Series Encoder

## Antenna Considerations

The choice of antennas is a critical and often overlooked design consideration. The range, performance and legality of an RF link are critically dependent upon the antenna. While adequate antenna performance can often be obtained by trial and error methods, antenna design and matching is a complex



Figure 17: Linx Antennas

task. Professionally designed antennas such as those from Linx (Figure 17) help ensure maximum performance and FCC and other regulatory compliance.

Linx transmitter modules typically have an output power that is higher than the legal limits. This allows the designer to use an inefficient antenna such as a loop trace or helical to meet size, cost or cosmetic requirements and still achieve full legal output power for maximum range. If an efficient antenna is used, then some attenuation of the output power will likely be needed. This can easily be accomplished by using the LADJ line.

A receiver antenna should be optimized for the frequency or band in which the receiver operates and to minimize the reception of off-frequency signals. The efficiency of the receiver's antenna is critical to maximizing range performance. Unlike the transmitter antenna, where legal operation may mandate attenuation or a reduction in antenna efficiency, the receiver's antenna should be optimized as much as is practical.

It is usually best to utilize a basic quarter-wave whip until your prototype product is operating satisfactorily. Other antennas can then be evaluated based on the cost, size and cosmetic requirements of the product. Additional details are in Application Note AN-00500.

## Interference Considerations

The RF spectrum is crowded and the potential for conflict with unwanted sources of RF is very real. While all RF products are at risk from interference, its effects can be minimized by better understanding its characteristics.

Interference may come from internal or external sources. The first step is to eliminate interference from noise sources on the board. This means paying careful attention to layout, grounding, filtering and bypassing in order to eliminate all radiated and conducted interference paths. For many products, this is straightforward; however, products containing components such as switching power supplies, motors, crystals and other potential sources of noise must be approached with care. Comparing your own design with a Linx evaluation board can help to determine if and at what level design-specific interference is present.

External interference can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Low-level interference produces noise and hashing on the output and reduces the link's overall range.

High-level interference is caused by nearby products sharing the same frequency or from near-band high-power devices. It can even come from your own products if more than one transmitter is active in the same area. It is important to remember that only one transmitter at a time can occupy a frequency, regardless of the coding of the transmitted signal. This type of interference is less common than those mentioned previously, but in severe cases it can prevent all useful function of the affected device.

Although technically not interference, multipath is also a factor to be understood. Multipath is a term used to refer to the signal cancellation effects that occur when RF waves arrive at the receiver in different phase relationships. This effect is a particularly significant factor in interior environments where objects provide many different signal reflection paths. Multipath cancellation results in lowered signal levels at the receiver and shorter useful distances for the link.

Make sure internal wiring is routed away from the module and antenna and is secured to prevent displacement.

Do not route PCB traces directly under the module. There should not be any copper or traces under the module on the same layer as the module, just bare PCB. The underside of the module has traces and vias that could short or couple to traces on the product's circuit board.

The Pad Layout section shows a typical PCB footprint for the module. A ground plane (as large and uninterrupted as possible) should be placed on a lower layer of your PC board opposite the module. This plane is essential for creating a low impedance return for ground and consistent stripline performance.

Use care in routing the RF trace between the module and the antenna or connector. Keep the trace as short as possible. Do not pass it under the module or any other component. Do not route the antenna trace on multiple PCB layers as vias add inductance. Vias are acceptable for tying together ground layers and component grounds and should be used in multiples.

Each of the module's ground pins should have short traces tying immediately to the ground plane through a via.

Bypass caps should be low ESR ceramic types and located directly adjacent to the pin they are serving.

A 50-ohm coax should be used for connection to an external antenna. A 50-ohm transmission line, such as a microstrip, stripline or coplanar waveguide should be used for routing RF on the PCB. The Microstrip Details section provides additional information.

In some instances, a designer may wish to encapsulate or "pot" the product. There are a wide variety of potting compounds with varying dielectric properties. Since such compounds can considerably impact RF performance and the ability to rework or service the product, it is the responsibility of the designer to evaluate and qualify the impact and suitability of such materials.

## Production Guidelines

The module is housed in a hybrid SMD package that supports hand and automated assembly techniques. Since the modules contain discrete components internally, the assembly procedures are critical to ensuring the reliable function of the modules. The following procedures should be reviewed with and practiced by all assembly personnel.

## Hand Assembly

Pads located on the bottom of the module are the primary mounting surface (Figure 22). Since these pads are inaccessible during mounting, castellations that run up the side of the module have been provided to facilitate solder wicking to the module's underside. This allows for very

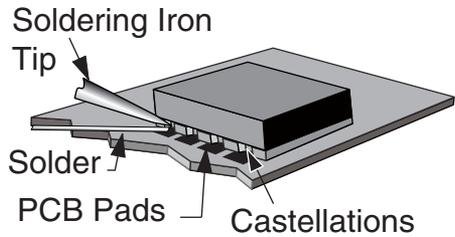


Figure 22: Soldering Technique

quick hand soldering for prototyping and small volume production. If the recommended pad guidelines have been followed, the pads will protrude slightly past the edge of the module. Use a fine soldering tip to heat the board pad and the castellation, then introduce solder to the pad at the module's edge. The solder will wick underneath the module, providing reliable attachment. Tack one module corner first and then work around the device, taking care not to exceed the times in Figure 23.

**Warning:** Pay attention to the absolute maximum solder times.

### Absolute Maximum Solder Times

Hand Solder Temperature: +427°C for 10 seconds for lead-free alloys

Reflow Oven: +255°C max (see Figure 24)

Figure 23: Absolute Maximum Solder Times

## Automated Assembly

For high-volume assembly, the modules are generally auto-placed. The modules have been designed to maintain compatibility with reflow processing techniques; however, due to their hybrid nature, certain aspects of the assembly process are far more critical than for other component types. Following are brief discussions of the three primary areas where caution must be observed.

## General Antenna Rules

The following general rules should help in maximizing antenna performance.

1. Proximity to objects such as a user's hand, body or metal objects will cause an antenna to detune. For this reason, the antenna shaft and tip should be positioned as far away from such objects as possible.
2. Optimum performance is obtained from a  $\frac{1}{4}$ - or  $\frac{1}{2}$ -wave straight whip mounted at a right angle to the ground plane (Figure 25). In many cases, this isn't desirable for practical or ergonomic reasons, thus, an alternative antenna style such as a helical, loop or patch may be utilized and the corresponding sacrifice in performance accepted.

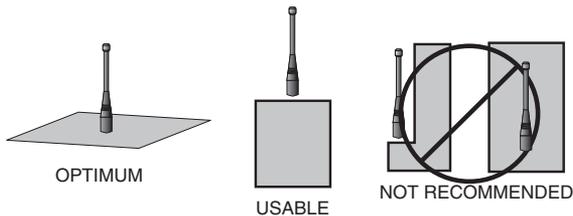


Figure 25: Ground Plane Orientation

3. If an internal antenna is to be used, keep it away from other metal components, particularly large items like transformers, batteries, PCB tracks and ground planes. In many cases, the space around the antenna is as important as the antenna itself. Objects in close proximity to the antenna can cause direct detuning, while those farther away will alter the antenna's symmetry.
4. In many antenna designs, particularly  $\frac{1}{4}$ -wave whips, the ground plane acts as a counterpoise, forming, in essence, a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -wave dipole (Figure 26). For this reason, adequate ground plane area is essential. The ground plane can be a metal case or ground-fill areas on a circuit board. Ideally, it should have a surface area less than or equal to the overall length of the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -wave radiating element. This is often not practical due to size and configuration constraints. In these instances,

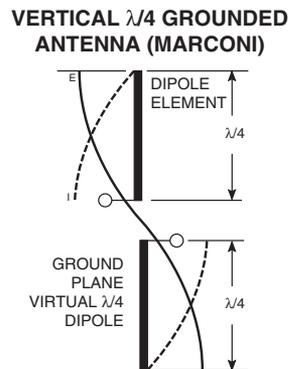


Figure 26: Dipole Antenna

## Common Antenna Styles

There are hundreds of antenna styles and variations that can be employed with Linx RF modules. Following is a brief discussion of the styles most commonly utilized. Additional antenna information can be found in Linx Application Notes AN-00100, AN-00140, AN-00500 and AN-00501. Linx antennas and connectors offer outstanding performance at a low price.

### Whip Style

A whip style antenna (Figure 28) provides outstanding overall performance and stability. A low-cost whip can be easily fabricated from a wire or rod, but most designers opt for the consistent performance and cosmetic appeal of a professionally-made model. To meet this need, Linx offers a wide variety of straight and reduced height whip style antennas in permanent and connectorized mounting styles.



Figure 28: Whip Style Antennas

The wavelength of the operational frequency determines an antenna's overall length. Since a full wavelength is often quite long, a partial 1/2- or 1/4-wave antenna is normally employed. Its size and natural radiation resistance make it well matched to Linx modules. The proper length for a straight 1/4-wave can be easily determined using the formula in Figure 29.

$$L = \frac{234}{F_{\text{MHz}}}$$

Figure 29:

L = length in feet of quarter-wave length  
F = operating frequency in megahertz

It is also possible to reduce the overall height of the antenna by using a helical winding. This reduces the antenna's bandwidth but is a great way to minimize the antenna's physical size for compact applications. This also means that the physical appearance is not always an indicator of the antenna's frequency.

### Specialty Styles

Linx offers a wide variety of specialized antenna styles (Figure 30). Many of these styles utilize helical elements to reduce the overall antenna size while maintaining reasonable performance. A helical antenna's bandwidth is often quite narrow and the antenna can detune in proximity to other objects, so care must be exercised in layout and placement.



Figure 30: Specialty Style Antennas

## Regulatory Considerations

**Note:** Linx RF modules are designed as component devices that require external components to function. The purchaser understands that additional approvals may be required prior to the sale or operation of the device, and agrees to utilize the component in keeping with all laws governing its use in the country of operation.

When working with RF, a clear distinction must be made between what is technically possible and what is legally acceptable in the country where operation is intended. Many manufacturers have avoided incorporating RF into their products as a result of uncertainty and even fear of the approval and certification process. Here at Linx, our desire is not only to expedite the design process, but also to assist you in achieving a clear idea of what is involved in obtaining the necessary approvals to legally market a completed product.

For information about regulatory approval, read AN-00142 on the Linx website or call Linx. Linx designs products with worldwide regulatory approval in mind.

In the United States, the approval process is actually quite straightforward. The regulations governing RF devices and the enforcement of them are the responsibility of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The regulations are contained in Title 47 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Title 47 is made up of numerous volumes; however, all regulations applicable to this module are contained in Volume 0-19. It is strongly recommended that a copy be obtained from the FCC's website, the Government Printing Office in Washington or from your local government bookstore. Excerpts of applicable sections are included with Linx evaluation kits or may be obtained from the Linx Technologies website, [www.linxtechnologies.com](http://www.linxtechnologies.com). In brief, these rules require that any device that intentionally radiates RF energy be approved, that is, tested for compliance and issued a unique identification number. This is a relatively painless process. Final compliance testing is performed by one of the many independent testing laboratories across the country. Many labs can also provide other certifications that the product may require at the same time, such as UL, CLASS A / B, etc. Once the completed product has passed, an ID number is issued that is to be clearly placed on each product manufactured.



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