

Astatic SWR Power Meter PDC2

The Astatic SWR Power Meter model PDC 2 is described as a three-function test instrument that claims to be able to measure standing wave ratio (SWR), RF power and also can act as a field strength meter. It appears to be designed for the Citizens' Band market and has an impedance of 52Ω .

Out of the box

On opening the transparent packaging, the meter appeared to be well-made, despite being light. Both front panel meters were clearly marked and easy to read.

Curiously, the instructions within the first paragraph refer to a "Model PDC-1 test instrument" and also despite many helpful tips for employing the meter, such as providing a table correlating SWR with power loss, they make no mention of how

to use it for its third intended function, a field strength meter. Nevertheless, it comes with a small wire antenna that screws into a socket on the left of the meter to fulfil this third function. Obviously, you will require a patch lead with at least one PL259 plug to connect it to your rig, the other plug being dependent on the output socket on your transceiver.

In use

I set it up and used it with my Yaesu FTdx101MP transceiver, which has a built-in SWR and power meter, hence I was able to compare the readings on the PDC2 with those on the Yaesu.

There are two power range settings: 10W and 100W, which are selected by a sliding switch on the front panel. I tried it initially on 28MHz as it is supposed to be a CB users' product and the readings were in accord with those on my transceiver, both in terms of SWR and power output. I also tried it on all the other HF bands and 50MHz and, once again, the readings were in line with those on the Yaesu. The instruction leaflet, which is written in English and French suggests that it should not be used at frequencies

above 148MHz, so by inference, it should work fine on both the 4m and 2m bands.

Conclusion

This is an inexpensive SWR and power meter and I found it as accurate as the inbuilt meter in my FTdx101MP. If I could only have one piece of test equipment, I would choose a SWR meter – I believe every amateur operator should have one, particularly if experimenting with different aerials. Amateurs returning to the hobby after years of being off the air will also find this a useful bit of kit if they are 'restocking' the shack.

It costs a very reasonable £39.95 and is a worthy addition to any shack. Being so light and compact, is ideally suited to portable operation too. All in all, I found it very straightforward to use. I would like to thank Moonraker (UK) Ltd for loan of the meter, <https://moonrakeronline.com>.

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The Astatic PDC2 SWR and Power Meter with Field Strength Antenna attached.

