

Your vintage valve radio

Safety aspects

- Vintage valve radios were not built to today's safety standards. Most radios came without a protective back cover.
- **High voltages** may be present on some components including the speaker transformer terminals. Never attempt to connect an additional speaker.
- Valves will get hot.
- Nothing inside the radio should be touched while it is plugged into the mains. The back of the radio is not safe with children or pets and should not be accessible to them.

Performance aspects

- Vintage radios are AM only. Good reception can be obtained on the Broadcast (medium-wave) band on most days. Expect poor short-wave reception as nowadays there is nothing being broadcast on short-wave with good signal strength in NZ.
- You will need to experiment with different lengths and positions of antenna (aerial) wire to get the best results. Usually a length of 2 to 3m of insulated wire is adequate, but a longer antenna may be required in areas of low signal strength. The best length and position of the antenna has to be found by trial and error. If the antenna is too short the signal may be too weak. If too long, the signal can become too strong and overload the radio, causing distortion.
- The antenna will also pick up interference from electrical appliances, causing a continuous buzzing or 'shhhhhh' sound. Strong sources of interference include LED lights, phone chargers and power adaptors, so the antenna needs to be kept as far away from such interference sources as possible. A separate earth wire is not necessary on sets which have an earthed chassis.
- Thunderstorms, even distant, can cause interference (intermittent 'crashing' sound).
- The radio is 60 to 90 years old. Some components may have been recently replaced, but other components will be original, and may fail in time. The valves are somewhat delicate and may be damaged if the radio is dropped or jarred. Do not expect valve radios to be as robust and reliable as modern solid state equipment, so treat them with care
- "Magic eye" tuning indicators are worn out in most cases. These are no longer made and working ones are hard to obtain.

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