

XC Retrieve is a system by which HG and PG pilots can use smartphones to locate each other to help with retrieves. The main instructions are on:

<https://flyaszent.wordpress.com/xc-retrieve/>

I am not very good with my smartphone and had difficulty following the “official” instructions so I wrote these notes. They are intended to be a step by step guide to basic operation of XC Retrieve.

There are two parts to XC Retrieve.

- 1) The web page www.xcr.org.uk This is a display based on Google maps on which locations of pilots will be shown.
- 2) “Telegram” messaging service. XC Retrieve works by putting messages into threads for particular “retrieve groups”. Each “retrieve group” is intended for a particular area of the country and there is a “Test” group so you can try out the system without interfering with retrieve operations or annoying too many pilots. By putting codes (identified by # symbol) into the text of these messages you can put information onto the thread and the map display. You can be a member of any or all of the groups.

To understand the system fully you will need to see both the message thread and the web page or flip between them on your smartphone. To try the system it may be easier to observe the web page on, say, a PC while using your smartphone for the message thread. (N.B. Telegram can also be run on a PC as well as a smartphone) The following instructions are for trying it out using the “Test” group.

- 1) Install the “Telegram” app on your smartphone and get an account.
- 2) Join the retrieve groups you wish to use. You will have to be vetted for each group to ensure you are a pilot and not just a troublemaker. I joined my local group and the “Test” group.
- 3) Open “Telegram” on your smartphone and find the XC Retrieve Test group thread.
- 4) Open www.xcr.org.uk. There will either be a menu showing or a button with three bars to select the menu. On your phone the menu may obscure most of the map display but clicking on “X” will close the menu to enable the map to be seen more clearly.

- 5) At the bottom of the menu select “Test” in the “Area” box. The display will then show locations of all the “Test” group members who have made their locations available.
- 6) Once someone from the “Test” group has “put a pin in” you will be also able to select “Test” in the “Group” box at the top of the menu.
- 7) To make your location visible to the group go to the Test Group thread and select the “paperclip” symbol at the bottom. This brings up a bunch of symbols.
- 8) Select the green “Location” symbol and if your smartphone GPS is locked it will show your location.
- 9) If the location looks correct select “Send selected location”. This will put a small map on the Test Group thread showing where you are and a red “Pin” on the XC Retrieve web page. The colour changes to orange after 15 minutes and yellow after an hour.

If you wish you can now attach a message in the thread to the pin on the map which others can see:

- 1) Put your message on the thread with the code #map at the end. Now if you click on your pin on the XC Retrieve web site the message will appear above the pin.

Moving Location

- 1) If you move to another location you can move your “pin” by re-locating as from step (7). The pin will go red again. The pin cannot be removed from the map but will disappear at midnight.

Clearing Your Location

- 1) Once you have been retrieved, have a lift, or no longer need assistance put a message on the thread with #cancel or #home at the end. Your pin will remain in place but its' colour will change to white.

N.B. It is really important to clear your location so others do not waste time looking for you unnecessarily.

To Find Another Pilot Whose Pin Is Visible

- 1) On the XC Retrieve web site map tap the pin of the pilot you wish to find and tap “Directions”.

The program will open a window in “satnav” mode and can direct you to the location of the pilot.

To Message Another Pilot Whose Pin Is Visible

- 1) On the XC Retrieve web site map tap the pin of the pilot you wish to find and tap “message@(username)”. Select “Telegram” and it will open up a private conversation with the pilot through the “Telegram” service.

Turning The System On And Off

- 1) Select the menu button in the top right of the Test Group page.
- 2) Select “Mute notifications”. Select the period for which you want the system to be turned off or “disable” to suppress it until you want to start it again.

To turn it on again select the menu button and “unmute”. The local group can be turned on and off in the same way.

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