

TRIED & TESTED
 MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT
 ★★★★★



Chat and more when you are on the move



8 months
 ON TEST

Cardo Freecom 4X intercom £243.95

Functions and quality that don't break the bank

'Get connected for less'



Tested by Robin Kirkley for eight months

The Freecom 4X sits in Cardo's midrange tier, aimed at solo riders or smaller groups of up to four, with a 1.2km (0.75-mile) range, compared to their top-tier Packtalk intercoms that connect up to 15 riders over 1.6km (one mile) using both Bluetooth 5.2 and Mesh.

Despite its mid-tier status, the Freecom 4X is packed with technology, including voice control and impressive audio quality via JBL speakers. After over eight months of use on my HJC i80 flip-front helmet, it's clear why the 4X is among the most popular intercoms with bikers.

The Freecom 4X connects to your smartphone and manages multiple phone functions, reducing the need to mess with your device while riding.

Installation in your helmet is straightforward, and once paired via Bluetooth, every power-up is met with chimes and the system's 'Phone connected' prompt.

You can also connect it directly to your satnav if you prefer not to use your smartphone, or to a CarPlay system that mirrors what you might use in your car. However, the 4X has only two connection channels, so you can pair your phone and CarPlay, or your phone and a satnav, but not all three at once. Other intercoms do allow for more connections. If there's no phone signal, I switch over to my Garmin, then back to Google Maps or Calimoto via CarPlay when available.

You can speak with four other riders within a 1.2km (0.75-mile) range, while some rivals offer group connections up to 5km (3.1 miles). It also supports universal connectivity

with other leading intercom brands which is handy.

The unit mounts on the outside of your helmet and has stood up to all-weather use – heavy rain, intense sun, freezing temperatures, mud, and dust. The 40mm JBL speakers deliver powerful, clear audio so you can enjoy music, even with earplugs in. You can also preset up to six radio stations as standard.

Charging takes about two hours for 13 hours of talk time while a quick 20-minute charge on the go provides roughly two hours on the road. Charging is easy: Just unclip the main unit from its base, leaving the rest attached to your helmet.

One drawback is the buttons, which can be tricky to find and press with gloves on – though not everyone shares this issue. Powering on or off requires pressing two buttons

simultaneously until you hear the prompt. There are different combo presses for music, track skipping, and answering calls, but with a little bit of practice, these become far more manageable.

The Cardo app also lets you tweak the unit settings, including speed dials. Call quality is clear, the mic deals well with wind noise and I also use it to record notes or video commentary on my phone.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.cardosystems.com

PROS & CONS

- +** Easy to set up, great sound, hands-free voice commands
- Controls can be tricky to use when wearing gloves



Unclip the unit for charging up...



...while the base stays on the bike