

Multiple Flash Channels

The D70 only controls one external group of flashes. You can use many external flashes, but they will fire at the same power.

To control more than one set of external flashes you need a fancier controller. This lets you change lighting ratios remotely from the camera. You can get this for free with the built-in flash of the D80 and D200, or use an SB-800 or SU-800 on any of the other cameras.

I'm only going to explain how to fire one wireless TTL slave. I've never tried using more than one wireless strobe at the same time. When I want two or more lights I immediately pull out my Novatron strobe system, which has more power, works better and costs less than multiple Nikon strobes. See my page on Studio Strobes for more.

If you're intrepid by all means go buy an SB-800 or SU-800 to use on-camera as the commander. You can control the various banks of other flashes from the SB-800 or SU-800. Also the D200's built in flash has the ability to talk to all the different flashes which the D70 can't. I still suggest real studio strobes for the same price instead.

Using On-Camera Flash For Lighting the Image

The flash of the D70 can't be used to light the final image. In remote wireless commander mode it only controls the remote flash, but doesn't add more than a slight bit of light to the photographed image. When the D70 and D70s built-in flash is used to control other flashes it can't contribute to the exposure. Even with both flashes (built-in and remote) only the remote contributes to the exposure.

The D200's flash can be set to contribute to the final image. You have to twiddle in the D200's menus to do this.

When working close and at large apertures you will see some contribution from the built in flash.

Older flashes like the SB-28 don't work at all with digital cameras in TTL modes, period.

I may have missed some of what's i-TTL and what's not. Please feel free to let me know if I missed anything.

HOW TO DO IT

This covers the D70 and SB-600 which I use personally. It should be similar on other cameras. Any questions? Presuming you have USA equipment, call (800) NIKON-UX for details.

On your D70:

Use P, S, A or M exposure mode.

Press MENU. Go to the yellow wrench menu, and be sure CSM MENU is set to DETAILED. Otherwise you won't see the next setting!

Go to the CSM menu which looks like a purple pencil. Set #19, Flash Mode, to "COMMANDER MODE." Further click to the right to set the commander mode to "TTL."

You also may set the commander mode to Manual or AA, which are other modes to fire the remote flash. The SB-600 only works with TTL and Manual. You set the manual power level at the camera.

Don't forget to POP UP THE BUILT-IN FLASH!

On your D200:

Press MENU.

Move up or down to: PENCIL menu.

Move right and down to: e Bracketing/Flash

Move right and down to: e3: Built-in Flash

Move right and down to: C Commander Mode

Move right to get to a confusing panel of C Commander Mode settings.

Once in this confusing panel you can set everything for two external groups of flashes and the built-in flash. You move between the different fields by moving left and right, and set any field by toggling up and down.

In this panel you must select Channel, and set it to 3. Default is 1, which is the default for the SB-800. Don't ask me why they are different. Default for the SB-600 flash is channel 3, so if you forget this it won't work! Sorry about the complexity; Nikon didn't ask me for help here.

This is such a pain I use one of the D200's setting banks to store this.

On your SB-600:

Hold down ZOOM and "-" together to enter the CSM settings. That's why you see a gray "CSM" marking between those two buttons.

Press either the + or - buttons until you see an icon that looks like a wiggly Z-shaped arrow. This arrow refers to wireless communication between the flash and camera. When you see the wiggly arrow, press MODE to make it say ON.

Press ZOOM and "-" together to get out of the CSM mode. Even easier, just tap the power button to get back to normal operation. It won't turn off if you hit it while in the CSM settings.

Presuming you did this correctly you'll see "CHannel 3" and "GROUP A" displayed. If you see different channels or groups then press MODE to get one or the other to flash and then the + or - buttons to set them back to 3 and A. No, I have no idea why these

are the settings you have to use instead of 1 and A; 3 and A are what you need to talk to the D70's built in flash. If you get smart and choose others then it won't work. The other channels and groups are for people much smarter than I who want to try to rig up a zillion flashes to work together and control them all separately and remotely. I prefer professional studio strobes if I'm using more than one strobe at a time.

The SB-600 doesn't go into standby in this mode, so you can run down your batteries if you forget and leave it this way. It just sits there blinking its little red LEDs visible from the front.

HOW TO SHOOT

Easy, just shoot! If you set everything to TTL as I suggest then the camera just does everything. You and I are free to concentrate on the more important parts of making a great image.

Everything is controlled from your camera. This is very convenient if you have the strobes someplace remote, like duct taped behind plants.

You can control the remote flash's output simply by varying the flash exposure compensation control on the camera. You can do that without taking your eye away from the finder! You do that by pressing the same button you used to pop up the flash and then moving the front control wheel. You'll see the amount of compensation on both the camera's top LCD as well as through the finder. Brilliant! You can add more or less flash fill without having to walk over to the remote flash.

You can set the mode (TTL, Manual or AA) from the camera.

You can set the manual power level from the camera as well.

Try to have the little black window on the bottom right of the flash (marked with that same wiggly arrow) pointing in the general direction of the camera. Thankfully it's not a big deal; you don't even need a line of sight so long as the flash is anywhere near the camera or subject.

The sensor is sensitive enough to pick up the flash from the camera even if it has to bounce around a corner or off the subject. This makes this current system so much better than the older ones. You can hide flashes anyplace and even if they can't see the camera they usually go off correctly. They beep to let you know what's going on, even if you can't see them.

The i-TTL system is much better than the old systems because it just works. If you ever used the older systems you'd know that half the time you'd get no flash, or a full-power flash that also wasted the shot. This new system just works, and that's critical for use in the field where the remote flash is rested on a garbage can or held in your left hand while you hold the camera with your right.

I even can have the flash in a different room out of view of the camera and it goes off just fine.

It works fine even 50 feet away. I haven't tried it any further. Honestly I have no need for a flash that far away; I was just seeing if it worked.

Beeps

Normal Beeps

I personally always turn off beeps, except for these. You can turn these off in the flash's CSM menu. I leave these on and suggest you do, too.

The SB-600 beeps twice quickly to let you know it went off. Otherwise you wouldn't know, since it's off-camera and your eyes are looking through your finder.

It beeps again with a single, slightly longer beep when it's recycled for the next shot.

For shots that use little power you'll hear two short and one long beep, meaning it went off and it's ready right away to shoot again.

For shots that use a lot of power and take a few seconds to recycle you'll hear two short beeps, a few seconds of silence, and then a longer beep. If it takes more than 10 seconds for the final beep then it's time to change the flash's batteries.

Single Beep

In manual mode you just get one beep to let you know it fired. It beeps after it's recycled and ready to fire again. Thus at any setting of 1/4 power or less you get the beep at the same time as your shot, since the flash is ready immediately.

At settings of 1/2 or full power you'll have to wait two seconds (1/2 power) or several seconds (full power) for the flash to recycle. When the flash is ready again you get your beep. If it takes more than 10 seconds then it's time to replace the flash's batteries.

You set the power level on your camera, a very handy way to do it, especially if your remote flash is far away.

Eight Beeps at Once

If the remote flash doesn't have enough power and suspects it's underexposed it will beep (and flash the LEDs) eight times.

It will beep once more after several seconds when it's recharged for the next shot.

The flash's LCD will show you by how much it thinks it's underexposed.

This means do something like open the aperture, get closer or take off your lens cap!

Several Alternating High-Low Beeps

If you set the camera to ask the remote flash to do something it can't do it will beep with alternating high and low pitch beeps.

For instance, setting the D70 to fire the remote flash in the AA mode and then using an SB-600, which doesn't support that mode, will get this response.

This beeping means you're doing something stupid and need to fix it.

The LEDs on the front also will flash rapidly several times along with the high-low beeping.

Flashing Lights

There are two red LEDs that blink once every two seconds on the front of the SB-600. If these are blinking then it's ready to fire. These stop if it's recycling after a shot or if the batteries die or turns off.

They do other things along with the beeps as explained above.

Zoom Settings

The remote flash doesn't read your camera's zoom setting. Since the flash is off the camera it makes no sense for the flash to duplicate the camera's angle of view. You'll want to adjust the flash's zoom setting manually.

This setting isn't important; I use the flash's zoom setting for creative effect to direct the light as I see fit.

HOW TO RETURN TO NORMAL SHOOTING

This is the bad part: you can't just put the flash back on the camera. It won't even fire if you forget to reset this all. You have to reverse all the settings you made above!

Even worse, if you forget to set the camera's flash back to normal operation you'll go bananas because it will look like it fires each time, however you'll get no flash in your photos! You'll see preflashes, but the on-camera flash doesn't fire for the actual exposure in commander mode. It will look like it's working, but you'll get zero! (Actually the on-camera flash does fire ever so slightly for the actual exposure, but it's almost nothing.)

Here's how to put it all back:

On your D70:

Set CSM setting #19, Flash Mode, back to TTL. (Don't confuse this with the Commander mode's TTL sub-setting. Set #19 back to TTL mode and not Commander mode.)

On your D200:

Press MENU.

Move up or down to: PENCIL menu.

Move right and down to: e Bracketing/Flash

Move right and down to: e3: Built-in Flash

Move right and up to: TTL

Move right to set it to TTL.

Sorry again for the complexity; Nikon never asked for my help. I don't reset my D200 this way. I use one of the Custom Setting Banks for remote flash, and simply select my normal Custom Setting when I want to return to normal TTL flash.

On your SB-600:

Press ZOOM and "-" together to enter the CSM settings. That's why you see a gray CSM marking between those two buttons.

Press either the + or - buttons until you see an icon that looks like a wiggly Z shaped arrow. When you see the wiggly arrow, press MODE until it says OFF.

Press ZOOM and "-" together to get out of the CSM mode. Even easier, just tap the power button to get back to normal operation. It won't turn off if you hit it while in the CSM settings.

or

You can cheat and just reset the SB-600 back to its defaults by holding the mode button and then pressing the ON/OFF button simultaneously for a couple of seconds. You'll see the display blink and it's back to normal. This is also marked RESET in gray on the SB-600. Of course this will lose any other custom settings you may have changed outside of this discussion.

MORE INFORMATION

See Nikon's help [here](#).

SUMMARY