

Repeater Etiquette and Tips

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To our fellow amateur radio operators, both new and experienced:

The information presented here is to help you become better with using repeaters. Most of what is presented is just "Repeater Etiquette and Tips", and not laws or regulations. All licensed radio operators must comply with all FCC rules and regulations at all times, of course. Most of the information contained here is just plain common sense, and is typical of most repeater systems.

These repeater etiquette comments and tips have come from multiple web sites and repeater users. These repeater etiquette and tips are not in any way directed at any one individual, and should only be looked at as suggestions to help you become better operators on anyone's repeater system. It is a good idea to listen to others -- see how they are using the repeater before keying it up yourself. Remember that a repeater is not a private line, but is a party line that can be **heard** by many other **ham operators, government agencies and the media.**

One of the most important things to remember when using any amateur radio frequency is --

The Amateur Radio Code:

A ham operator is:

Considerate: never knowingly operates in such a way as to infringe upon the pleasure of others.

Loyal: offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, and the American Radio Relay league... through whom Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

Progressive: with knowledge abreast of science, a well built and efficient station and operation above reproach.

Friendly: slow and patient operating when requested; friendly advice and counsel to the beginner; kindly assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

Balanced: radio is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, jobs school or community.

Patriotic: station and skill always ready for service to country and community.

How to make a call on a repeater; pauses, and how to acknowledge others.

First: listen, listen, and listen to make sure the repeater is not in use. When you are satisfied that no one is using the repeater, key your mike and wait about 2 seconds for any linked repeaters to wake up, then call the other station using their call sign once or twice followed by your call sign (e.g.: "N1RMF, N1RNF this is N1QLN"). Wait for a short period of time for the other station to respond to your call. If you get no response try again. If still no response is heard clear the repeater by saying your call sign, and clear (e.g.: "N1QLN clear"), in this way others know you are through.

If you are listening and the repeater is in use, when there is a pause in the transmission, key up saying your call sign (e.g.: "N1QLN"). The other stations should acknowledge your call sign. When called upon ask if you

can make a quick call, using the same method as above, or you may wish to join the conversation.

Why have pauses? There are a couple of reasons, first so other stations, who may wish to join the conversation, and also so the repeater has time to reset. If you are talking and it is getting close to the 3 minute time, (repeater time outs often vary from repeater to repeater) say "let me reset". **DO NOT SAY "let me roll it"**. Repeaters are on racks and do not roll around very easily. They do reset the 3 minute timer but do not "roll". Please also remember that on a linked repeater system not all the repeaters reset at the same time so allow for a 2 to 3 second pause for all the repeaters to reset their respective time-out timers.

If you are on the repeater and there are a number of others using it, do not tie up the repeater in a two-way conversation. Know your place in the round table and pass the conversation to the next operator. If someone asks you a question, answer it on your next turn. If you need to have a two-way conversation, and there are multiple people on the repeater, go to another repeater system or use a simplex frequency.

Calling CQ on a repeater should not be used, simply state you are listening or monitoring. "CQ" is used on other bands and frequencies that are not channelized such as with single sideband and International Morse Code, and is generally frowned on as poor practice on repeaters. If the repeater is quiet, and you are looking for someone to talk to, listen for a couple of minutes to hear if the repeater is in use and then key up with your call sign and listening or monitoring. (e.g.: "N1QLN listening" or "N1QLN monitoring").

Do Not Use the word BREAK as this can be interpreted as an EMERGENCY (Unless you have an Emergency). It will be explained later how to report an emergency.

If you make a mistake on the repeater, admit your mistake and apologize. Everyone makes mistakes from time to time. Mistakes do happen and by admitting your mistake and trying to correct it in the future, you gain respect and show others that you are a responsible operator.

When do you need to identify your station?

You need to identify with your station call sign at the end of each conversation and at least every 10 minutes during a conversation (FCC rules Part 97.119). The repeater will identify the repeater every 10 minutes so if you hear the repeater identify then identify your station. After all the repeater is only a machine, and does not know who you are.

Some general guidelines for identifying with your station call sign:

1. Initially when transmitting, calling or responding to a call (beginning of a conversation).
2. Every ten minutes (required by FCC rules and regulations) during a conversation.
3. When you end your conversation (required by FCC rules and regulations).
4. If you are in a round table discussion you may need to identify more often, so others know you are there and to help facilitate a smoother more efficient discussion.

Signal Reports:

You can ask for a signal report to find out how you are making the repeater, by asking for a signal report ex. (This is N1QLN can someone give me a signal report). Do not "kerchunk" the repeater. Kerchunking is transmitting a short burst of signal several times to see if the repeater is operating or can "hear" you. Unless someone is listening in on the input Frequency they cannot tell you exactly what your signal is like. The other stations can only tell you what is coming out of the output of the repeater, such as "full quieting into the machine" or, "you are not making the machine" (in which case use more power or change location) or, "you are

picket fencing" (which means you might be in a bad location or are on the fringe of the repeater's receiver.

Emergency Calls:

If you have an Emergency Call, then in plain English when there is a pause in transmission say "Emergency" and your call sign. The other stations will let your Emergency Call through. Be as precise as you can with the nature of the Emergency, its location, and be prepared to provide additional information as may be required. Please remember to keep a safe distance from the emergency so you don't become a part of it.

Using Jargon, Q-Signals, and Phonetics:

Speak using plain English. The Q-Signals were developed for use solely on CW (Morse code). The use of phonetics, generally speaking is not necessary. Most signals, generally speaking, are strong out of the repeater and can be heard quite well. If another station cannot quite hear your call sign they may ask for you to say it phonically, in which case use of the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) phonetic alphabet should be used. http://www.emcomm.org/svares/training/itu_phonetics_10_30_2001.htm The ITU phonetic alphabet is the best and generally accepted by the world-wide radio communications community. It could be quite confusing to hear a station identifying using "King One Denmark France Sweden". Try "Kilo One Delta Foxtrot Sierra", instead.

You may hear amateurs say that they are at their "QTH". Simply state in plain English that you are at home, at work or at your destination. Another example is "QSY". Just say that you are going to another frequency or repeater system. Sometimes you will hear a station "go QRT". That means that they are shutting down. Another one you may hear quite often is "QSL". Just ask the other station "do you acknowledge or Roger?". You can answer by saying "Roger", "acknowledge", "affirmative". "QSO" is another one you will hear very often. There are many other Q-signal short cuts, so to speak and there are many different web sites to find these. Just remember that they are designed for use when transmitting using Morse Code!

<http://ac6v.com/Qsigvhf.htm>

<http://www.qsl.net/w5www/qcode.html>

<http://www.rogerwendell.com/gandz.html>

Conclusion:

There are many resources for repeater etiquette that can be found. Repeater etiquette is mostly common sense and courtesy towards others. Keep in mind that the FCC requires the Repeater Trustee and Control Operators to monitor the repeaters to insure Compliance with the rules. The ICRC hopes that this brief overview gives you, the amateur radio operator, a better understanding of repeater etiquette, and some handy tips for better operating practices. The ICRC would like to thank all those who contributed these tips, the linked repeater systems of Connecticut, the 10-70 Repeater Club, the Tri-County Radio Association, and many local hams. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy many years of ham radio operations.

From the Charter Oak Radio Society Elmers

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