Proper Repeater Procedures and Etiquette

While not all-inclusive, the following procedures establish a baseline for all repeater users to follow. If you follow these few guidelines, you will be acting as a responsible member of the amateur community, and you will sound like you have been using repeaters for years!!

1. **Listen Before You Talk:**
   When preparing to use the repeater, be sure to listen before you press the PTT. Please remember to key your microphone and pause for a second or two to insure that ALL the links come up and your transmission is not cut off at the beginning. When you turn on your rig, check your volume setting to be sure you <u>can</u> hear any activity on the repeater. It is also good practice to ask if the repeater is in use, there may be a net in progress or someone may be waiting for another party to return to the air shortly. Simply ask, "Is the repeater in use? This is <your callsign>".

   With the proliferation of dual band/dual display radios, be sure you are set up to transmit on the desired band and/or frequency.

2. **Admit to Your Mistakes!**
   Accidents are bound to happen – you may inadvertently transmit into an ongoing conversation because you forgot one of the points above. The best way to handle this is to apologize for your error! Be a responsible adult- you will gain more respect through your regret, in spite of your mistake!

3. **Station Identification:**
   All stations should identify themselves using their FCC assigned callsign upon:
   > Initially transmitting on the repeater (strongly suggested);
   > Every ten minutes thereafter (required);
   > When they end their conversation or "sign off" (required).

   > In addition, when operating in a net or "roundtable" your callsign should be announced more frequently if needed to facilitate efficient communication. If you are participating in a large group (4 people or more), identifying with every transmission may be warranted so that you do not exceed the 10-minute FCC requirement. Assume that every other individual will talk for 3 minutes each. By the time you get your turn again, you will be over the 10-minute limit.

Otherwise, use the repeater identifier (in voice or CW) as a benchmark for when you should identify, and do so on your next transmission.

Any transmission on the repeater which is not either indicating you are listening, or calling another station or stations before communication is established is considered "Broadcasting" and is not allowed on Amateur Radio and on the repeater.

When initially coming on a repeater, (which is not previously in use verified by LISTENING for a reasonable time or, if you're not sure ask, "Is the repeater in use?" PRIOR to transmitting), it is only necessary to announce your call. If you would like to solicit a conversation, you can announce your presence on the repeater by stating, "<your callsign> listening".

4. **Testing:**
   To test repeater access, _DON'T just kerchunk the repeater without identifying!_ Instead, use the term "testing". Example: "<your callsign> testing".

   If you want a signal report from another amateur, state that in plain English. Example: "This is <your callsign>, can someone give me a signal report?"

   Do not use the repeater frequency to check antenna SWR or to do other equipment checks. Move to simplex if possible and use a dummy load.

5. **Demonstrations:**
   From time to time, an amateur may want to demonstrate the capabilities of amateur radio to another non-amateur. The typical way to do this is to ask for a "demo" such as, "_<Your Call sign>_ for a demonstration." Anyone who is listening to the repeater can answer them back. If you answer such a call, give the calling party your name, callsign, and location, not a lengthy conversation. Someone doing a demo may ask for stations in a particular area to show the range of amateur radio communications, such as, if the calling station is in Torrington, CT, they may ask for any stations in the Hartford area, which is more interesting than demonstrating that they can talk to someone in the same town as they are in.

6. **Making a Call:**

If you are trying to contact a specific station, you should announce, … "<Callsign of station being called> - this is - <your callsign>". Your callsign is stated AFTER the station you want to call. If you do not get an answer after a couple calls, announce "<your callsign> - clear". This lets everyone else listening know that you have released the repeater for others to use.

If the repeater is already in use, please wait for a pause between transmissions to announce your call. If you want to contact another station not in the current conversation, ask if you can make a call in plain English. Simply announce Call Please or state, "<your callsign> for a call".

Make your call when the parties using the repeater turn the repeater over to you. If you contact the party you are seeking, turn the repeater back to the person who turned it over to you, thank them for letting you in, and move to another frequency to hold your conversation no matter how short you think it might take.

If you do not get a response from the party you are seeking, turn the repeater back to the person who turned it over to you, and thank them for letting you in.

When a new station enters the roundtable, those stations using the repeater, and the next station in rotation should acknowledge the new station AND turn it over to them, or let them know what their place is in the rotation. Also indicate who they should turn it over to in order to keep the rotation intact. Remember to give your name as a matter of introduction so everyone becomes familiar with you!

7. **Being a courteous 'guest':**
   Whenever you use a repeater that belongs to a group to which you are not a member, or belongs to an individual and you do not support the repeater (especially when you are traveling in an area not frequented), it is always common courtesy to thank the group for allowing you to use the system, similar to what you would do if you borrowed someone's cell phone to make a call. Simply state, "This is <your callsign> clear – Thank you for the use of the repeater" when signing off. It is likely that no one will say "your welcome", but rest assured that someone heard you, and accepted your gratitude.

   If you frequently use a repeater, it is courteous to join the organization that is responsible for maintaining the system, or in the case of a

system under single party ownership, asking the owner if he accepts donations towards the upkeep of the system. Repeaters are expensive to maintain, and keeping them on the air and running efficiently takes a lot of time and capital. Even if a repeater is considered "open", that does not make it a public utility- your support is important.

A guest is considered to be someone who uses a system on an infrequent basis. The term guest has its limits however…. If your mother in law asked you if she could stay at your house for a while, and proceeded to stay for several months, at what point would the term 'guest' no longer apply? The same rationale applies to the use of a repeater!

8. **Emergency Calls:**
ONLY USE THE TERM "BREAK" OR "BREAK BREAK" in an emergency or life-threatening situation.

All stations using the repeater should pause after the previous station drops the carrier (releases the PTT) to minimize inadvertent "doubling" (simultaneous transmission) and to allow time for new stations to identify.

If an incoming station announces an emergency with a single or double "break", the repeater is to be given to them IMMEDIATELY for their traffic.

9. **Jargon and Techno-speak:**
Communication should be in plain language, as if you were communicating over the telephone. Although you may hear many others using them, "Q" codes are not required and their use should be minimized ("Q" codes were established for CW communications then extended to HF voice to facilitate quick and easy intelligibility- on VHF or UHF this is not necessary).

"10" codes should not be used, and avoid using CB "handles" in place of your name! Many hams can trace their radio roots to CB, but if you are a current or former CB'er, please leave your CB lingo behind. Ham radio is a whole different country from CB. Using your CB ways on the repeater is the fastest way to be labeled a LID (a bad operator).

Similarly, phonetics should be reserved for those instances when they are required or where ambiguity should be avoided (minimal signal / emergency traffic for example).

10.   Interjecting a Comment:
If listening to a conversation and you want to make a "comment" you should come into the conversation between transmissions by first identifying with your call sign and then state your intention. Example: "<your callsign> with a comment". If you are not able to join in the conversation due to time or other constraints, make your comment when the participants turn it over to you, sign out, and turn the repeater back to the individual who turned it over to you or to the next person in the rotation, depending upon circumstance. Remember to thank the participants for letting you in, and remember to clear with your callsign.

11.   Extraneous Tones and Identifiers:
Except when required for control or identification purposes, extraneous audible content should NOT be transmitted before, during or at the completion of a transmission. This includes DTMF tones, your background TV or music on the car stereo.

12.   Content:
While certain topics and vocabulary are not "illegal" for commercial broadcasting, the owner/operator of the repeaters, ***DOES*** prohibit those communications. These topics are in poor taste and a waste of the repeater facility.

While the following should not be considered all-inclusive, it will establish a <u>baseline</u> for behavior that is **NOT PERMITTED** on the repeaters:

> "Off Color" comments, sexual innuendo and ANY double interpretation of words. Remember, use of codes and ciphers is NOT permitted by FCC regulations. If it can't be said in plain English, it should not be transmitted on the repeater.

> Commercial communication: you can, certainly, identify your occupation and describe what you do, however, if you are for example, a salesman, you CANNOT try to sell your wares on the repeater.

> Derogatory remarks directed at any group (ethnic, racial, religious, sexual etc).

"Bathroom Humor": If you wouldn't tell the joke to your ten-year-old child, don't tell it on the repeater. This includes conversation pertaining to bodily functions.

Any activity in violation of FCC rules and / or any other Federal, state or local laws or ordinances (including, but not limited to: jamming, "stepping on", broadcasting of music, unidentified carrier, etc.) is prohibited. Note: intentionally transmitting simultaneously with another station ("stepping on") is prohibited by FCC regulation… even if the intent is good natured kidding among friends… it is still illegal.

Proper and legal operating etiquette is 95% common sense. While the above limits on content are not all inclusive, they should make clear the type of communication that is NOT appropriate.

The FCC requires the Control Operators to monitor the repeaters to insure compliance with the rules. We would not like to hear illegal or sloppy operating habits on our repeaters, because such problems could cause FCC actions against us. We should all be mindful of our operating procedures- Newer users of the repeater will copy our poor practices, purely out of the ignorance of proper procedures, and likely will add their own errant ways into the mix. Let's avoid this downward spiral!

Users who violate the above will be warned after the first offense. The policy is to act first and ask question later. In most cases, we will try to contact stations off the air, rather than discuss any difficulties over the repeaters.

If the behavior recurs, steps will be taken, including revocation of the person's privilege of using the repeater systems. Additional steps will be taken as necessary.

The repeater Trustee and Control Operators have the right and the duty to shut the repeater down should a warning of an FCC rule violation go unheeded. Remember that they have the responsibility of preserving the trustee's license and any activity on the repeater results in the de-facto involvement of the trustee.

Thanks to KB1AEV   June 21, 2018