

Ham Radio Etiquette

Congratulations on your new ham license. We understand that getting on the air can be a bit intimidating. Don't worry; we all ere new hams once. Take the time to listen to the various repeaters. In general, following these simple guidelines go a long way toward making you sound like a seasoned pro.

When you talk on the radio, talk like you were talking to someone across the table, not across town or across the country. Use English and avoid jargon as much as possible. Q-codes are really a Morse code short hand. They have their place when voice communications are marginal. Say "My wife" rather than the "xyl". Avoid falling into the habit of using cute-ism. "Roger Roger", "QSL on that". Speak like you were talking to someone face to face.

Key the mike, AND THEN start to talk. Don't start speaking as you key the mike. A number of repeaters have a short delay before transmitting. If you start speaking too soon, your first few words may not be heard. Also, make sure you have finished talking before you un-key the mike. Give your call sign clearly, and slowly. You worked hard to get your call, so say it clearly and proudly.

Avoid phonetics unless you are asked to do so. When using phonetics, use standard phonetics. "Alpha, Bravo, Charlie"... etc. Trying to decipher "King Charlie Zero Jamboree Xylophone Freeloader", for KC0JXF is difficult.

If you are listening and would like to have a conversation, just give your call sign. You can add "monitoring", or "listening", but there isn't any real reason to. Using the term "CQ" on a repeater is generally discouraged. When you wish to communicate on a frequency, listen for a while before talking, there may be a conversation in progress. If you want to join into a conversations, just give your call between transmissions rather than using the term "Break Break". You will be acknowledged and allowed into the conversation.

If you want to talk to a certain person, call him using his call several times, then your call several times. Many hams have their radios scanning several repeaters. If your call to someone is too short, the scanner may not pick it up. People are not always at the radio when called, so give them time to get to the radio. If you have an emergency, give your call and say "emergency" rather than using "Break Break". Saying "emergency" will make it clear why you are interrupting and it will also get more attention from those just listening.

Make sure you ID according to the rules, but avoid over ID'ing. If you are using a repeater system, the repeater has a timer so that it can ID every 10 minutes. When you hear the repeater ID, it's a good time to send yours. There is no need to send your call sign, the say "For ID". Your call sign IS your ID.

The term "73" is pronounced "Seven Three". It is a Morse code term that has found its way into voice communications. The term means "Best Regards" so saying "Seventy Three's" is a bit like saying "Best Regards". The term "88" is pronounced "Eighty-Eight" and means "Hugs and Kisses", so be careful who you send "88" to.

It is generally frowned upon to "Ker-chunk" a repeater. That means keying up your radio for just a moment so that the repeater transmits, usually you hear the "courtesy beep" afterwards. This is also annoying to the repeater owners and control operators. If you want to make sure you are transmitting okay, make sure you give your call sign.

Have fun.

These are just a few pointers to help you sound like an old pro. Enjoy the hobby and remember, no matter what happens on the air, always be nicer than the other guy. Joining a local radio club and having access to the club's repeater will make the hobby more rewarding. You will make many friends. Do not be afraid to ask questions. We were all just beginners at one time.