

# Hot Tips

*Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory*



## Be brief when it's your turn

Let's face it...you probably love the sound of your own voice, and can listen to it for hours. Unfortunately, not everybody shares your love for your voice. For many of us, it's easy to get a bit long-winded and start rambling. In short, be brief, but within reason.

### Common courtesy

Unlike with cell phones, when you're on the radio, you have a captive audience. I mean, as long as you're talking, there's no way for the others listening to interrupt you or stop you. Are you certain that what **you** have to say is that much more important than what the other person is saying? Yes, you have a lot to share, but practice common courtesy, and allow others a chance to speak **their** minds as well.

This is not to say you need to limit your turn at the mic to two-word sentences; in fact, you should feel free to speak. Just think about what you're going to say, then try and be *concise*, that's all. Sometimes it's just not practical to cut your statement shorter, and that's alright too. The point is to use **good judgment** and **be considerate** of other people's time.

### Practical reasons

Most radios include a feature known as a *time-out timer* (or *transmit overtime* on some transceivers), often labeled TOT, and is typically set for 60 to 120 seconds. Its purpose is to prevent your signal from being transmitted for longer than it should. One reason to limit your transmission time is to prevent "timing out the repeater" or exceeding the repeater's own time-out timer, which is typically set to between three and ten minutes.

If you should ever time out the repeater, the repeater might reset, and possibly reboot its controller, which can take several minutes to revive, preventing everybody from accessing

the repeater during that time. If your station has a "stuck mic" or a microphone whose PTT does not release, the repeater might reset repeatedly. If this should happen two or more times within a short period, the repeater could remain "down" until the control operator can revive it remotely. (A hand microphone PTT can get stuck in the "on" position if it's accidentally wedged between the vehicle seat folds, for example.)

If you're involved in an emergency service, like ARES, it's good to practice being concise and to the point anyway. People's lives can be at stake if you take too long to say something.

### Guidelines

Here are a few tips that might help you be brief on the radio:

- Try and keep your transmissions down to about thirty seconds, give or take
- If you think you're getting close to your thirty seconds, release the PTT for a second and resume speaking, if you're telling a story or a long joke
- If you can't think of what to say, release the PTT
- Similarly, if you find yourself saying "and, uh.....um.....um....." a lot, that's also a good time to release the PTT

### Finally

By the way, here's a little-known fact: your PTT button doubles as an *RTL* button. RTL stands for **release to listen**, so while you can press it to talk, remember you can release it to listen.

And from an old Chinese proverb,

*He that speaketh little, thinketh much.  
And he that thinketh little, speaketh much.*