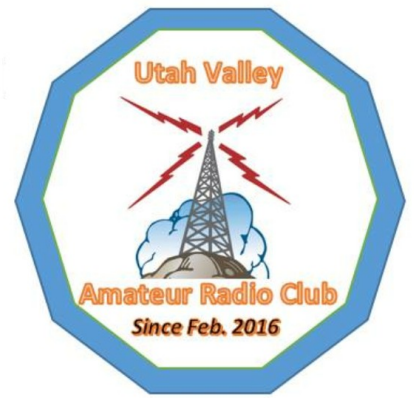


Brass Tacks

An in-depth look at a radio-related topic



Ham radio best practices

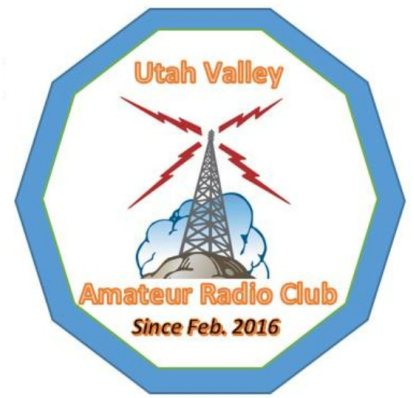
At our first club meeting of the year we had a group discussion about ham radio etiquette and best practices. The participation and response were both helpful and encouraging; it told us that you really care about keeping our air waves friendly, civil, and accommodating. Noji and I divided the topic into two sub-sections: Radio Etiquette and Personal Etiquette.

Radio etiquette

- When speaking into your microphone, try talking **across its face**, rather than blowing directly into it
- Place your hand microphone about two or three inches from your mouth when transmitting, but stay **within an inch** of your built-in microphone
- When using a handheld radio with a whip or duck antenna, try and keep the antenna **pointed upward** when you're transmitting
- When announcing your call sign along with that of another ham, the rule is to **put yourself last**, as in *K7XYZ, this is K7ABC* if your call sign is K7ABC
- While it's customary to call out CQ on HF (SSB) bands, it's best practice on the FM (2-meter and 70-cm) bands to announce your call sign instead
- If another ham points out a problem with your transmission (*you're sounding a little scratchy*), always assume the problem is with *you* (location, orientation, power too low, etc.) or *your equipment* first, and always **admit your mistakes**
- If you'd like to jump into an ongoing conversation, avoid using the word *break*; instead, **say your call sign** between their transmissions
- After your contact releases his PTT button, **allow one or two seconds before you press yours**, in case another person wants to join the conversation or has an emergency
- Be considerate of your contact's time, and **minimize dead-air time** by at least thinking of what you're going to say before keying up (and while it's fun to use your PTT button, don't forget that it's also an **RTL button**)
- Avoid *kerchunking*, which is repeatedly pressing and releasing your PTT button without announcing your call sign; it's not only illegal, but irritating to others, especially those listening on a repeater
- When speaking through a repeater, try and keep your conversations to under **a few minutes**

Brass Tacks

continued



Personal etiquette

- While it's not always possible, try and make your conversations **positive and upbeat**; sounding positive attracts friends, while negative comments tend to turn other hams away from you, even if you mean well
- Don't react like you're offended just because another ham can't remember your name or call sign
- Avoid making **insulting or disparaging remarks** about others on the air; what people hear you say about others, they'll also believe you'll say about them
- If you feel you must correct the behavior of another ham, do so off-air, tactfully, and **out of earshot** of others
- Within reason, avoid burping, coughing, sniffing, clearing your throat, smacking your lips, and making other bodily or disgusting noises on the air

There were a number of other good mentions by you at our January club meeting, but I didn't write them all down, and I don't remember them, so if I'm missing some of them here, why not send me a line (preferably to uvarcshack@gmail.com) and let me know what I can add?

Please keep in mind that 1) these are *not* UVARC or repeater policies and 2) they are *not* hard, fast rules, but merely *guidelines*, suggestions on how to help make the airwaves a more friendly and familiar place to hang out.

— Lisa Ratzlaff, KR5LYS (lisaratz1@gmail.com)

Emergency Communications Etiquette

Good News - You'll be heard by anyone monitoring the radio frequency! This increases your chances of getting the help you need.

Bad News - You'll be heard by anyone monitoring the radio frequency! No radio communication is truly private, so don't broadcast sensitive information.

