

Hot Tips

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



How to (not) irritate another ham on the radio

As friendly ham radio operators, we want to enjoy our craft and engage with others in a positive, meaningful way. Most of us have no intention of offending another person. Yet we do make mistakes, often innocently, and wind up turning somebody off to us for awhile.

Still, as much as we try to be positive and upbeat in this newsletter, sometimes it's helpful to highlight the potentially negative things that can damage an on-air relationship. Here are some tips that you might (or might not!) already be aware of.

Habits to avoid on the air

- Kerchunking (pressing your PTT, and then not saying anything)
- Continue carrying on a conversation after receiving a poor audio or signal report (if the other station asks you to remain on the air, to help solve your problem, that's different)
- Frequently correcting others
- Talking at great length about physical or mental health or other personal problems
- Attempting to engage others about controversial political or religious topics (discussing politics and religion on the air is completely acceptable, to a point, but there's no sense in trying to provoke others by insisting on a particular point of view)
- Insulting others, behind their backs or otherwise
- Rattling off phonetics rapidly
- Ignoring somebody who requests to join in the conversation
- Repeatedly not waiting long enough after the other person un-keys, before you press

your PTT (not giving enough *space*)

- Repeatedly creating "dead air" (pressing your PTT, but saying nothing) during your turn
- Eating

Words to avoid on the air

- 10-4 ("ten four")
- *break*
- *handle*
- *good buddy*
- Racial, religious, and personal slurs
- *mayday*

On the other hand

It's true that some hams can get a little irritated by an operator who attempts to introduce CB, public safety, or military language into the amateur mix. If you're one of those who feel violated by any of these when you hear it, simply take a deep breath and try and be understanding, without correcting the operator who said it. He'll get it in time, with or without your help.

Some terms might be more appropriate in a stake or other religious net, but not appropriate in an ARES net. Also, these guidelines are compiled for an American audience, so a slightly different set, especially the words, might apply if you're operating outside the US.

At any rate, have fun! This little list wasn't intended to cause alarm or put you on the defensive. Just a few guidelines to help make the amateur radio going a bit easier. Chances are, they're pretty intuitive, and common sense will dictate which habits and words you should avoid on the radio.