

Hot Tips

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



Learn to use the Reverse function

In our ever-charitable desire to be helpful to other hams, we sometimes encounter those who have difficulty getting into or even reaching the repeater. When we hear somebody struggling like this, it might be worth our while to help out by communicating with the person directly rather than through the repeater. But if he's tuned to the repeater, and you don't know his phone number, how can you alert him, so that you can help him?

One way is to switch to what we call **Reverse** mode, which most radios support. The *reverse* function merely switches the repeater input and output frequencies on your radio. Normally, when communicating through a repeater, you use your radio to talk into the repeater input frequency and listen on the repeater output frequency. On *reverse*, you talk into the repeater output frequency, so that your friend can hear you, and listen on the repeater input frequency, so that you can hear him.

But communicating on *reverse* like this only works if the other person can reach you better than he can reach the repeater, because the repeater is possibly out of his range on one side (to the north of him, for example), but you're within his range on the other side (to the south of him, for example). Or this might work when your friend is being obstructed from the repeater because of a mountain or tall building, but you have a clear shot of both him and the repeater.

Using the Reverse function

So, how do you use this *reverse* function? Many mobile units and some HTs have a button labeled **REV**. Just press that button once, and your radio switches its repeater input and output frequencies, then press it again to get out of reverse, and back to normal repeater communication. If you're on a Baofeng or



Wouxun, simply press the * (star) button for *reverse*. If you have a Yaesu HT (handheld transceiver), simply press C. Then press the same key to exit *reverse* mode. There's no need for your friend to go into *reverse* mode.

Once you're in communication with the other ham by *reverse*, kindly let him know that his signal is not making it into the repeater. Offer helpful, non-critical suggestions on what he could do to improve his transmission, like move to a different location, point his speak closer or louder into his microphone, and so forth. It's possible that his antenna has come loose or is pointed sideways instead of up.

The last thing to keep in mind when communicating in *reverse* is that you might want to let others know you're in *reverse* mode, since even though you're not technically using the repeater, you're tying up the repeater, because you're preventing others from using the repeater output. You might get a lot of **You're not in the repeater** reports from others. Another thing is that switching to *reverse* is no guarantee that you can reach him better; in fact, it might be worse, but it's something you can try, in your quest to be the helpful ham.

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