

The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?



What it means to *monitor*

While listening to the radio, you've no doubt heard somebody announce to nobody in particular that they're **monitoring**. But wait, is that legal, to broadcast something to the general public, without addressing somebody specific? Technically, according to Part 97.111(b)(2), amateurs are permitted to make one-way transmissions in an attempt to make a two-way contact with another station.

To announce that you're monitoring means that you're listening for people who might be requesting help in an emergency or something as simple as a signal report. It can also mean that you just want to talk with whomever is listening at the moment. If somebody does request help, you can answer the call if you feel you're able to provide the requested assistance, or direct the caller to another person who *is* able to help.

Calling **CQ** is similar to announcing that you're monitoring, in that you are attempting to make contact with another amateur. But the two do have some differences. First, calling CQ allows you to present your signal on the radio so that a person who is casually tuning around can home into your signal and locate you to communicate. This is not appropriate on FM repeaters because they're channelized, and casually tuning around until you can fine-tune the signal on one doesn't make much sense. Second, the purpose of calling CQ is to make a contact or casual conversation, where announcing that you're monitoring can also mean that you're listening to be of potential assistance. (To learn more, visit the ARRL's [First Contact page](#) and click *FM Repeaters*.)

There was a time when monitoring meant that the operator is attempting to listen for rule violators and possibly record their conversations. Today when an operator announc-

es that he or she is monitoring, it simply means they are available for a casual conversation, and listening for anybody who might want to chat.

So, how does one become a monitor? If you have a valid amateur radio license, simply listen. And when there's no traffic (talking) on the frequency, just say

- ***This is KI7ABC, monitoring***
- ***This is KI7ABC, listening***
- ***This is KI7ABC, mobile*** (if you're traveling)

Even after announcing that you're monitoring, you have no obligation to answer anybody; it's still your choice who you want to talk with. And by the way, if you'd like to monitor while you're out hiking in the back country, try using the [Wilderness Protocol](#) and be of help to possibly stranded hams.



Every so often, turn on your radio and announce that you're monitoring, indicating that you're willing to converse with whomever is listening. Most of us live busy lives and don't have time for every person who wants our attention. But, if you make time for, and befriend one or two hams you don't know, your generosity will pay off.

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