

# Microvolt

June 2024



## Ham Radio Best Practices



|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Cover story           | 2   |
| Editorial             | 3   |
| Letters to the editor | 4   |
| Club news             | 5   |
| For your information  | 6   |
| Spotlight on K7DHR    | 7   |
| Tech corner           | 9*  |
| Strays                | 15* |

*\*Online version only*

Do **you** follow amateur radio best practices? What exactly are *best practices*? And *best* according to whom? Are these best practices governed by rule, or gentlemen's agreement?

Whether you've operated amateur radio for many years, or you're brand-spanking new, if you've ever communicated over radio, both you and others have likely developed a comfortable style and set of unique habits. But are they *good* habits?



## Cover – Amateur radio best practices

The focus here is not on radio equipment installation, hardware guidelines, or safety, but following good on-air etiquette. According to the rules (Part 97.1e), one of the primary purposes of amateur radio is to enhance international goodwill. Where better to start that international effort than right at your own station? Yet, the rules don't specify exactly how to implement that enhancement, leaving the rest to your good judgment.

Regardless the situation, when interacting with other human beings, above all, the key attribute that should guide our words and actions is **kindness**. Whatever we say to others should be said *kindly*; whatever we do to or for them should be done in a *kind way*. If we find a situation in which it seems too difficult to be kind, it might be best to remove ourselves from the potential conflict and not say anything, rather than say or do something unkind.



In the amateur radio world, the art of mentoring or tutoring another ham is known as **elmering**, something we discussed here previously. **You** are an elmer, because other operators look to you for guidance or just a good example. There was no exam, no special certification; only your kindness and willingness to share and help, that qualified you to be an elmer.

Here are a few best-practice guidelines:

- When announcing your call sign, along with that of another, **put yourself last**, as in "K7XYZ, this is K7ABC" if your call sign is K7ABC.
- Leave some space between transmissions by waiting a second after your friend releases his PTT, before you press yours.
- Keep your mouth within an inch of your HT (handheld transceiver) microphone and within a



couple of inches of your hand microphone.

- Keep your HT antenna pointed upward.
- Avoid **kerchunking**, which is repeatedly pressing and releasing your PTT button to test your connection to the repeater, without saying your call sign.
- If you'd like to jump into an ongoing conversation, avoid using the word *break* or *contact*; instead, **say your call sign** between their transmissions.
- Avoid answering when you hear the word "testing" because it means "I'm running a test, so please don't interrupt me".
- Try and keep your comments positive and upbeat.
- Avoid talking about others behind their backs.
- Avoid transmitting bodily noises, such as burping, eating, coughing, and worse.

If possible, avoid the three Cs: **criticize**, **correct**, and **counsel**. *Counsel* simply means giving unsolicited advice. Yes, the person might thank you later, but leave the advice-giving to others, those of *his* choosing.

Are you a person who feels the need to get on the radio and correct an operator right away for making a mistake? If so, there is a way to **correct others over the radio**, but in general, **resist that urge**, especially if the offense is not all that important.

And if you should hear another person on the radio criticize or correct a newer operator, you might want to keep in mind that the offender might not realize his approach is offensive, simply because of his upbringing or background. Get on the radio and reassure the newbie, rather than confront the bad guy.

In a couple of weeks, you'll have a unique opportunity to test your Best Practices skills during **Field Day**. While you're hearing the examples of others, you can demonstrate your inner elmer as well.

*Microvolt editorial staff*