

Microvolt

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Let's Go Portable

Going **portable** means taking your radio gear out of town, out of your home, or just out of your comfort zone, then setting up and operating from that location. It's yet another way to have fun with ham radio. But, are there other reasons to go portable? What kind of equipment does that require? And will that be expensive? Let's explore what it's going to take, to get you and your radio out of the house and on the road!



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*Online version only

Cover – Going portable

Being portable might mean that you can quickly join an outdoor activity already in progress. Or it can mean that you're prepared to bug out and set up an emergency station away from your usual operating location.

Before you venture out on your portable journey, here are a few **decisions** you might need to make:

- Your band(s) of choice: HF or VHF/UHF or both?
- Operating location?
- Solar, generator or vehicle power?
- How long do you plan to be there?



As you can see, going portable requires a little prior **planning** on your part. But it'll also require some down-to-earth equipment:

- Transceiver, microphone, tuner, key, headset
- Antennas, masts, guy wires, stakes
- Coax, barrel connector
- **Batteries, generator, power supply**, fuel, cabling
- **Solar panel, charge controller**, inverter, cabling
- Tool kit
- **Headlamp**, desk lamp, **flashlight**
- Food, water
- Pen, paper
- Coat, gloves, hoodie, sweat shirt, sunglasses



- Toiletries, medications
- Shelter (tent / RV / vehicle / canopy), table, chairs
- Phone, laptop, charger

When you work portable away from your city for the first time, you might be surprised at how low the noise floor appears on your S-meter and how little noise is in the audio you're hearing. The high level of noise generated by laptop power supplies, wall warts, inverters, and small appliances, from your neighbors **and from your own home** will be in your rear-view mirror.

Keep in mind the three rules to amateur radio success: **test, test, test**. Some of this testing might include these:

- Test your transceiver and microphone
- Check your batteries
- Check your fuel
- Check the location availability
- Check the weather



Finally, don't forget to let somebody know where you're going, and when you plan to return, especially if you're going to operate alone.

Microvolt editorial staff