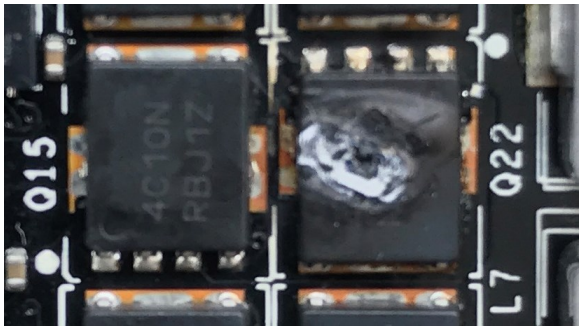
Microvolt

Monthly newsletter of the Utah Amateur Radio Club

March 2026



Equipment Repair

As many are fond of saying, *If it ain't broke, don't fix it*. Ok, but what if *it is* broken? Should you attempt to repair it yourself, or should you call a friend or a specialist? The fact is, many amateurs would rather fall out of a tree than tackle a repair job on their own. They seem to lack repair skill confidence, fearing they might make the problem worse, or that their meddling will void the warranty, or that their potential repair failure will make them appear less-than-intelligent to others. Let's dive deeper into the need to repair, should our equipment require it.

Cover – Repair and troubleshooting

If our amateur radio equipment ever fails, many of us fear the worst, and immediately imagine a drain on our bank accounts or give up hope of ever seeing the gear work again. This month's editorial examines the mentality that many of us have embraced as a result of our tendency to dispose of things rather than fix them. But are there things we can fix on our own without requiring years of technical training? It turns out that some "repairs" might be easier than they first appear. By no means comprehensive, here are some tips that might help you troubleshoot a few of your own issues:

Transceiver stops working

- Coax might be loose or disconnected
- VOX might be enabled

Equipment fails to power on

- Power cord might be disconnected or loose
- House circuit might have a tripped breaker
- Power supply might be turned off
- Equipment might have a dead battery
- Your equipment might have a blown fuse

Unable to hear anything on HF

- RF gain might be too low
- Squelch might be too high or AF too low
- Your rig might be in the wrong mode
- An external headphone might be plugged in
- VOX might be enabled

The radio shuts off when I press the PTT

- Power supply is too small for the job
- Try again with the power turned down

None of the controls seem to work

- Lock feature might be set
- Frequency might be set outside amateur bands

Less than expected power while transmitting

- SWR is too high
- Coax might have a short
- Antenna might be loose or disconnected

Can't hear each other on the repeater

- Radio might have a Receive Tone set
- You two might be too close to each other

Beep at the end of your transmission

- Radio might have the WIRES feature turned on
- HT might have its Roger Beep enabled

Loud hum heard by others on your signal

- Your HT might be sitting in its charging cradle
- Try coiling your coax a few turns to create a choke
- Your antenna might be too close to your radio

Sound from your HF rig is staticky or rough

- Try unplugging the external speaker
- A thunderstorm might be nearby
- Turn off the Pre-Amplifier and the Notch Filter
- Rig might be in the wrong mode (AM vs. SSB)

On HF, I can hear them, but they can't hear me

- They might be working split operation
- Your antenna might not be ideal for transmitting
- The other station might be in your skip zone

As you can see, the "damage" can appear big, but the "repair" might actually be small. Often, instead of sending your equipment out to get repaired, the "fix" might be something you can simply handle yourself, like a good, old-fashioned ***factory reset***.

Microvolt editorial staff