

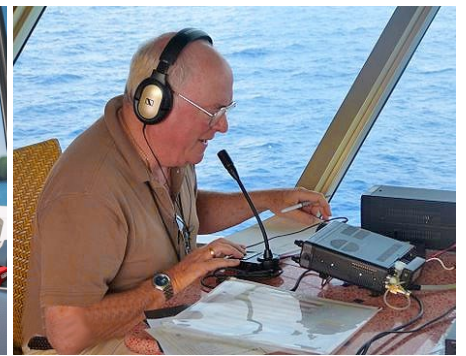
Microvolt

Monthly newsletter of the Utah Amateur Radio Club

February 2026



Station Installation



Your amateur radio station could be large or small, meager or elaborate, expensive or cheap, or even something in between. Is your station installed in a car, an RV, a boat, a plane, your attic, or in your basement? For a starter or basic station, your “installation” was likely no more involved than a purchase and thoughtful placement. Does that describe your station, or did you need to expend significant time and money to set up your dream shack? Let’s take a look at *station installation*, to explore and share some possibilities.

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Cover – Ham radio station installation



So that we're on the same page, our radio equipment that includes a transceiver is known as our **station**, whereas the room that houses that equipment is often nicknamed our **shack**. Relevant to this discussion, we've built our station into our shack, and the focus is the **installation** of that station.

Reaching out for help

Many of us are quite self-sufficient, requiring little help from others. But most of us occasionally need a little extra assistance in the way of muscle, skill, confidence, or maybe just an extra pair of eyes. At times a little heavy lifting of a battery, a rig, or a piece of equipment requires us to ask others for their strength or industrial tool to do the lifting.

By **confidence** we mean that it can get a little scary to climb a roof, get into an attic, or use an instrument for which we have little or no training, such as an antenna analyzer, wire stripper, or soldering iron.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you encounter somebody who makes you feel like you should have known the answers, don't let that bad experience discourage you, and ask somebody else. Typically, **the hams who ask the dumbest questions become the smartest operators**. Keep asking, and don't let anybody stop you from asking more questions.

Go for it

Some questions that often arise include

- What if I do something dangerous or illegal?
- Will being only a Technician prevent my success?
- Do I possess the skills required for my project?
- Given my circumstances, will my ideas work?

Sometimes, it takes a little courage, but rest assured that **your installation will work**. You can always improve on it, but if you've done a little homework, have searched for some advice, and have basically done some due diligence, chances are pretty good that your station will make you proud.

Example installations

Here are a few common station installations that modern amateurs just like you have constructed, not including the ham radio gear:

- Dedicated computer desk with computer, monitor, band chart, boom microphone, and foot switch
- Card table with pen, paper, and desk lamp

- Truck with the radio control head mounted on the console and transceiver body behind the seat, plus a microphone hook installed on the side of the console and power cable to the battery
- Temporary folding TV table with a gaming headset and surge-protected power strip nearby
- HT (handheld transceiver) clipped to a MOLLE backpack with an accessory hand microphone

The "ham radio gear" that accompanies any of these can be a pair of HF and VHF transceivers, plus power supply, feed lines, meters, rotator indicator, key, and so forth. As you can see, your station can be arranged in a variety of installation preferences.

The physical layout

Some station installation issues should be addressed during the design phase of your shack, including

- Safety (electrical, sharp corners, rough edges)
- Convenience (everything within reach)
- Lighting
- Power (AC, battery, solar, fail-over)
- Computer (almost a necessity today)
- Audio (speakers, headset, head phones, etc.)
- Station grounding (bonding, ground loops)
- Shack RF (RFI, or radio frequency interference)

As one person put it, *for a wireless hobby we sure seem to have a lot of wires*. One task that needs your attention is how to collect, restrain, and even conceal your tangled mess of wires. The disorderly array of coax, microphone cables, USB cables, keyboard, mouse, and power cords can be not only unsightly but dangerous. You can easily bundle some of them in [raceways](#), [loom tubing](#), and [cable straps](#).

Microvolt editorial staff