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Communications Course
Write Up 2 – Routine Communications (Repeater Etiquette)
June 2019

Routine Radio Communications – The Hobby Side

For many of us, the reason we got into the hobby of amateur radio is to “rag chew”, or converse and talk with friends just for fun. Many enjoy occasional conversations with friends while others hold regular conversations all over the globe on the HF bands.

Even those interested only in the fun side of amateur radio must remember that communicating via amateur radio is not a right, but rather, a privilege that can be taken away. We must, as an example, not operate for a profit or exceed frequency privileges even in casual radio communications. While reading FCC and ARRL publications regarding amateur radio rules is vital, being involved with others in the hobby can help us all learn from each other. The Paradise Amateur Radio Society is here to help all of us be responsible in radio communications and, to begin, we start with proper Repeater Etiquette.

Why do we care about Repeater Etiquette?

We are typically not the owners of the repeaters we utilize. The repeater owner is responsible for the operation of the repeater and we are using someone else’s property. Learning general repeater etiquette may not teach us everything about the desired behavior on every repeater, but it does go a long way to ensuring better success.

Many operators often use repeaters all at the same time. Misuse on our part may preclude others from accessing a repeater for enjoyment or for reporting an emergency. Properly using a repeater helps new operators learn communications guidelines and demonstrates professionalism in our hobby.

Radio Repeater Etiquette Tips

There are several factors, including published guidelines for specific repeaters, to consider when utilizing a repeater. Seeking input from all operators is a prime goal of the Presentation to Members on this subject.

Perhaps guidelines can be broken down into four areas:

1. Before using a receiver
 - Read the specific rules for the specific repeater if you can
 - Consider the use of simplex instead of tying up the repeater
 - Set up the radio correctly
2. Determine how to enter into a conversation
 - Directed Method
 - Monitoring Method
 - When, why and how to interrupt a conversation in progress
3. Transmitting Guidelines
 - Think about message before speaking – there are no private conversations
 - Mic settings and position
 - Listen to ensure repeater is not already in use
 - Do not Quick Key
 - Delay between receive and transmit
 - Don't tie up repeater and ask if others want to use it
 - Avoiding "doubling"
 - Call sign requirements
 - Use of NATO phonetic alphabet AND Q-Codes
 - No kirchunking
 - Don't get into an argument and ignore jammers
 - Avoid inappropriate topics
4. Terminating a conversation
 - If your radio signal is weak
 - Over versus Out