

## Repeater Dos and Don'ts

- Listen and follow along, but don't assume everyone is doing it right!
- There is good procedure and bad, and eventually you will sort it out
- learn to listen every time you switch to a repeater; don't assume because no one is talking the minute you turn to that repeater that it is open
- that goes for any time you turn on the radio!
- if you have listened for a minute or two and don't hear anything, you can put your call out to see if anyone else is out there, such as  
"This is AK3Q, listening"

You don't have to say CQ on a repeater. We do this on simplex modes because we are giving time for folks who might be scanning the frequency to hear us as they scan; on simplex we often repeat our calls several times, again to give time for someone to hear us

- on a repeater if you are making it into the repeater and someone else has that repeater tuned in, they will hear you.
- Enunciate clearly and slow down! Most folks, once they are comfortable operating, race through their call (eg. "Kk4jlb")
- Another reason to slow down is because some letters are stronger than others (eg. Kj4iam) – the "a" can easily get lost between the I and the M so that what someone hears is "kj4im"
- This is why many net control stations will ask for call signs to be repeated phonetically -
- Make your goal to speak in such a way that you cannot be misunderstood
- This doesn't just go for call signs!

Repeaters usually have hang time (a second or two pause after the transmission stops)

- And they usually have a courtesy tone to others know a transmission has ended
- Always a good idea to pause a moment or two after the courtesy tone to make sure the repeater is clear.
- A pause after the last person's transmission also helps you to know if someone else was trying to transmit at the same time, often called "doubling"
- Doubling will happen so don't sweat it; but we can all minimize how often it happens by learning a few good habits
- If you realize you doubled with someone pause for a moment and let the other person know you think there was a double
- If in a net, the net control will often handle this, but he or she may not know if they were the one you doubled with!

- Also, when beginning your own transmission key the mike (that means press the PTT button), and pause for at least 1-2 seconds before beginning to talk. This makes sure the repeater has had time to acknowledge your signal and open up properly
- Repeaters are fast, but not lightning fast!
- Again this is good practice regardless of the band or frequency you are using
- When working on a repeater, don't speak loudly—you'll just likely make yourself harder to understand
- If someone says you are hard to hear, make sure you are really talking into the mike properly, and repeat your transmission.
- When done properly, a calm clear voice will get through with no problems
- Remember a repeater can only transmit one signal at a time—if two get mixed together usually nothing legible is heard
- Don't use Q-code abbreviations on a repeater; they are not conducive to clear communications; especially for newcomers!
- Q-codes were developed as shortcuts for Morse code, not voice Tx
- Use appropriate language—this means no cussing or abusive language of any kind; assume children are listening!
- Also, go above and beyond the requirements of typical conversation; as hams we intentionally hold ourselves to higher standards!
- Over-the-air is not the place to argue or have fights or call people names
- Our licenses are a privilege, not a right; "do unto others" applies!
- While a long conversation may be fine, check often to see if others want to use the frequency or if they want to join in; most folks will wait patiently, but keep aware that others may be out there waiting
- If you want to join in a conversation, the appropriate way is to wait for a pause in the conversation and just say your call
- Because you have listened for a while before trying to talk, you will likely pick up the flow of the operators and know when to say your call
- For example, when there is a pause, I might say "AK3Q" quickly, but still clearly, and then wait to be acknowledged
- Someone may finish their thoughts or respond to the other person first, and then say something like "I heard another station out there, come on back with your call sign"
- If no one acknowledges you after a few minutes, you can try again
- Most folks will acknowledge you pretty quickly; occasionally you might get some grumpy Gus who thinks they own the frequency, but not very often
- If you can't get a response after several tries, move on—don't get aggravated

- If you have scheduled a time to meet someone on the air, sometimes letting the folks know what's going on helps.
- Eg. You break into a conversation by using your call like before: AK3Q and waiting for a response; one of the folks already on the repeater might say, "AK3Q, go ahead" Explain you have a scheduled contact and would like to put a call out to that person to let them know you are there; assuming good manners all around, the person will then say "go ahead and make your call"; only then would you call "KK4JLB, this is AK3Q;" assuming KK4JLB is there, he would come back AK3Q this is KK4JLB"; you might then suggest another repeater to meet on, or simply let the person know you will be standing by until the repeater is free
- It is likely the folks already on the repeater will invite you both to join in, or they may wrap up their conversation and give you the frequency
- If they have no intention of leaving and they don't invite you in, suggest a different repeater to your friend and move there – don't get into an argument about your right to use the repeater!
- If this becomes a persistent problem try letting someone from the club who owns the repeater know what is going on, but privately, not over the air.
- Always, always take the high road – you will be much better for it

## **Nets**

Nets have special procedures where someone, usually referred to as net control, will handle check-ins and direct the format of the net.

- the check-in point is where there are likely to be some doubles, and so it is always good to keep things short and sweet when checking in.
- give the required information, clearly, and then listen for net control to acknowledge you after they take more check-ins.
- If it becomes apparent net control has not heard you, try again at an appropriate time
- If net control has moved on, don't interrupt-there will be time for more check-ins later
- Most nets encourage visitors, so feel free to check in unless the net control station has limited check-ins for members-only
- Some nets may be more formal than others, such as emergency training nets; this usually means there is more formality in structure or operating procedures You will learn a lot by listening!