

CARC Repeater Operating Policy

Repeaters – what are they and how to use them

Written by the ARRL and adopted by the Chipola Amateur Radio Club

Before operating CARC repeaters, read this policy in its entirety.

More hams use frequency-modulated (FM) voice than any other communications mode. Most hams have an FM rig of some type. They use it to keep in touch with their local friends. Hams often pass the time during their morning and evening commute talking on the air. In most communities, amateurs interested in a specialized topic (such as chasing DX) have an FM frequency where they meet regularly to exchange information. At flea

markets and conventions, hand-held FM units are in abundance as hams compare notes on the latest bargain. Generally, it's a good idea to use VHF or UHF for all local communications. The HF bands should be reserved for longer-distance contacts to reduce interference on the HF bands.

Repeater Operating

Before you make your first FM repeater contact, you should learn some repeater operating techniques. It's worth a few minutes to listen and familiarize yourself with the procedures used by other hams in your area. Accepted procedures can vary slightly from repeater to repeater. These policies are the adopted policies of the Chipola Amateur radio Club for operation on 146.67, 444.950, and 147.045

Your First Transmission

Making your first transmission on a repeater is as simple as signing your call. If the repeater is quiet, just say, "Your Call" or "KI4 --- listening" -- to attract someone's attention. After you stop transmitting, you will usually hear the unmodulated repeater carrier for a second or two. This *squelch tail* lets you know that the repeater is working. Someone interested in talking to you will call you after your initial transmission. Some

repeaters have specific rules for making yourself heard. In general, however, your call sign is all you need. **If no one returns you call after a few attempts, don't continue to call for hours on end. If someone wants to respond, they will after a couple of calls.**

Always identify your station if you key up the repeater, NO EXCEPTIONS!!

No kerchunking please.

Don't call CQ to initiate a conversation on a repeater. It takes longer to complete a CQ than to transmit your call sign. Efficient communication is the goal. **You are not on**

HF, trying to attract the attention of someone who is casually tuning across the band. In the FM mode, stations are either monitoring their favorite frequency or not. Except for scanner operation, there is not much tuning across the repeater bands.

To join a conversation in progress, transmit your call sign during a break between transmissions. The station that transmits next will usually acknowledge you. **Don't use the word "break" to join a conversation** --unless you want to use the repeater to help in an **emergency**. To make a distress call over a repeater, say "*break break*" and then your call sign to alert all stations to stand by while you deal with the emergency.

A further word about emergencies: Regardless of the band, mode or your class of license, FCC Rules specify that, in case of emergency, the normal rules can be suspended. If you hear an emergency call for help, you should do whatever you can to establish contact with the station needing assistance, and immediately pass the information on to the proper authorities. If you are talking with another station and you hear an emergency call for help, stop your QSO immediately and take the emergency call.

To call another station when the repeater is not in use, just give both calls. For example, "WO4J, this is K4KHV" If the repeater is in use, but the conversation sounds like it is about to end, **wait** before calling another station.

If the conversation sounds like it is going to continue for a while, however, transmit only your call sign between their transmissions. After you are acknowledged, ask to make a quick call. Usually, the other stations will stand by. Make your call short. If your friend responds, try to meet on another repeater or on a simplex frequency. Otherwise, ask your friend to stand by until the present conversation ends.

Use plain language on a repeater. If you want to know someone's location, say "Where are you?" If you want to know whether someone you're talking with is using a mobile rig or a hand-held radio, just ask: "What kind of radio are you using?" Don't use 10-4 or say 73s. There is not an "s" on the number 73. You get the idea.

No Cursing !!

Courtesy Counts

Keep transmissions as short as possible, so more people can use the repeater. Again, long

transmissions could prevent someone with an emergency from getting the chance to call for help through the repeater. All repeaters encourage short transmissions by "timing out" (shutting down for a few minutes) when someone gets longwinded. The **time-out timer** also prevents the repeater from transmitting continuously, due to distant signals or interference. **Because it has such a wide coverage area, a continuously transmitting repeater could cause unnecessary interference. Continuous operation can also damage the repeater.**

You must transmit your call sign at the end of a contact and at least every 10 minutes during the course of any communication. You do not have to transmit the call sign of the station to whom you are transmitting. Never transmit without identifying. For example, keying your microphone to turn on the repeater without saying your station call sign is illegal. If you do not want to engage in conversation, but simply want to check if you are able to access a particular repeater, simply say "N1KKB testing."

Simplex Operation !!!!

After you have made a contact on a repeater, move the conversation to a *simplex* frequency if possible. **The repeater is not a soapbox.** You may like to listen to yourself, but others, who may need to use the repeater, will not appreciate your tying up the repeater unnecessarily. The easiest way to determine if you are able to communicate with the other station on simplex is to listen to the *repeater input frequency*. Since this is the frequency the other station uses to transmit to the repeater, if you can hear his signals there, you should be able to use simplex. If you want to perform an on-the-air test of a pair of hand-held radios, you should select an unoccupied simplex frequency.

The function of a repeater is to provide communications between stations that can't otherwise communicate because of terrain, equipment limitations or both. It follows that stations able to communicate without a repeater should not use one. That way, the repeater is available for stations that need it. (Besides, communication on simplex offers a degree of privacy impossible to achieve on a repeater. On simplex you can usually have extensive conversations without interruption.) Select a frequency designated for FM simplex operation. 146.520 mhz in the universal simplex frequency.