

Twin City Amateur Radio Club

Repeater Conduct Guidelines

March 1, 2014

The Twin City Amateur Radio Club Board adopted the following Repeater Conduct Guidelines in accordance with good amateur practice as defined in FCC Part 97 and the amateur code:

1. Always identify according to the regulations.

The use of good operating procedure is a distinct characteristic of Amateur Radio. It's important that you convey to the public and to new hams the image that Amateur Radio operators are skilled communicators. A friendly style is great, but please try to operate professionally and don't become sloppy. Remember that new or prospective hams are listening to you. Show them how to communicate clearly and concisely. Amateur Radio regulations are largely self-enforced and we all need to work together towards these goals. You should identify your station when you make contact with another ham, then every 10 minutes or more often if you like, and at the end of your conversations.

2. Avoid lengthy conversations.

Please limit conversations to 15 or 20 minutes, especially during morning and afternoon commute times, and evenings. Then take a good long break or move to another frequency. Other hams might want to use the repeater but might not be interested in the subject your group is discussing. None of us should monopolize the repeater, even unintentionally.

It's not enough to pause now and then and invite others to join in. They may just not be interested in the topic. The repeater is a single communication channel shared over a wide area by TCARC members, non-members, and visitors.

3. Do not engage in political soap boxing.

Soap boxing, which goes hand-in-hand with overly long conversations, is when people carry on a conversation that is a thinly disguised broadcast on the repeater. The subject is generally to "put down" an institution, group, or an individual for as wide as possible an audience. This is very objectionable to other repeater users (who might not yet be a member) and listeners (who might not yet be a ham). Using the club's repeaters as a platform for soap boxing is unacceptable.

Conversations on the repeaters should be friendly ones. Do not make them negative commentaries on institutions, groups, or people. Avoid discussions on inappropriate subjects including politics, sex and religion. Amateur Radio is not a broadcast medium – 97.113(5)(b).

Are we talking about censorship? No. A person may have the right to stand on the street and say bad things about someone. They don't have the same right when they are a guest in that person's house. When using the TCARC repeaters, you are a guest operator of our station. No one has any right to use the club's repeaters in ways that the club feels are objectionable.

4. Do not routinely circumvent the time-out timer.

The repeater's time-out timer serves two purposes. The first is to satisfy regulation 97.213(b) requiring us to limit repeater transmissions to a maximum of three minutes under automatic control. Currently the K9CU 2 meter repeater has a 3 minute timer. Simply unkey your microphone to reset the timer.

Like many repeater owners, we also use the time-out timer as a way to encourage users to limit the length of individual transmissions. This gives everyone a chance to speak. Under normal conditions, it is rude to get around the time-out timer by momentarily dropping carrier to reset the timer or saying "Stand by, let me reset" and continuing.

Resetting the time-out timer should only be done as absolutely required and *infrequently*. Learn to speak concisely and limit the length of your individual transmissions. This is good practice for efficient emergency communications.

5. CB Lingo, "Q" codes and excessive phonetics.

Amateur Radio operators find the sound of CB lingo worse than fingernails on a blackboard. The main thing to remember is to just talk normally. Talk just like you would to someone in the same room. Nothing is different about talking over the radio.

Using any of the "Q" codes and phonetics is helpful on modes like CW to shorten transmissions or provide clarity in marginal voice modes, but they are not necessary on a good communication channel like a repeater. Occasional use of Q signals or phonetics can be a reasonable style, but talking in normal sentences is preferred because there may be new hams or prospective hams who won't understand the codes.

6. Always yield the frequency to a breaking station.

This applies to all calling or breaking stations, because you never know if they have an emergency or not. Just recognizing a breaking station and continuing with your conversation should be avoided. All new breaking stations giving their callsign between transmissions should immediately be given a chance to transmit. However, breaking stations should contribute to the ongoing topic, make a short call, or declare an emergency. They should not "hijack" the conversation by discussing unrelated topics.

7. Our repeaters are "G-Rated" 24 hours a day.

You never know who may be listening. Even late at night, there are generally people listening to the repeater, including non-hams. This is important to understand for several reasons.

Our repeaters serve many purposes. One of the most important is the exposure it gives the hobby to the community. Any scanner can be used to listen to our repeaters. That's good – It's actually the most visible aspect of our club. It's one of our most effective forms of publicity.

We want non-hams to know that Amateur Radio is an interesting hobby made up of a good group of people - something clean and educational - something they would want their kids to get involved in. Kids may or may not listen late at night, but their parents do.

We want any ham that hears us to think of us as good operators. Any time we talk on the repeater, we are ambassadors for the hobby.

8. Our rule is simple: absolutely *no* obscene, indecent or profane language at any time.

Here is our policy: the Twin City Amateur Radio Club repeaters are open for all to use, provided users follow the club's rules in using them. Nothing could be fairer. The ARRL says it clearest of all. "A repeater is *not* a public utility - you don't have a "right" to use it! When you are using someone else's repeater you are, in effect, a visitor in the owner's station. So, you should conduct yourself accordingly. If you use that station in a manner that the owner finds objectionable, the owner has every right to revoke your privilege of using it!" (*Source: The ARRL's FCC Rule Book*)

This is an FCC policy that is enforced.

We wish for everyone willing to abide by these simple rules to freely use our repeaters. We welcome you, and we hope you have many enjoyable conversations on the repeaters of the Twin City Amateur Radio Club, and will subsequently want to join the TCARC and contribute to the maintenance of the repeater system.

If you hear deliberate interference or profane transmissions, try to continue your conversation as if there was no interference. **DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE OR ENGAGE IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE INTERFERING STATION UNLESS DIRECTED TO BY A CONTROL OPERATOR.** (Direction finding or recording for FCC documentation may be in effect) Turn your transmitter power up if possible to cover up the interference. Sometimes the time out timer will be activated by the interference and interrupt your communication flow. Usually the interfering person will lose interest and move to a different repeater. A control operator might turn off the repeater for a period of time.

9. Respect the Courtesy Tone.

The Courtesy Tone, a Star Trek like sound, is in place to permit someone wishing to enter the conversation or make a comment at a time other than their turn. When the conversation is turned over to you, please wait until you hear the tone before you speak. A station wishing to be heard should speak prior to the tone – just dropping your callsign should be sufficient. The tone creates the open space for a station to enter the conversation, or to make an out-of-turn comment. At times, a different tone may be heard, indicating that there is an Echolink connection on the repeater. Please acknowledge the Echolink station.

10. Echolink Use.

The 2 meter repeater has open access to Echolink, an internet connection which enables the repeater to connect to other repeaters worldwide. Anyone may connect and disconnect Echolink. Please announce your intent prior to connecting. When you finish, please be sure to disconnect Echolink, and announce your callsign. To connect, simply use the touchtone keys on your microphone to enter the node number of the remote repeater. When finished, simply press the # (pound sign) and the system will disconnect. Please refrain from making a series of Echolink connections as this blocks the repeater from others wishing to use it. To test your audio, dial 9999 and wait for the instructions. You can then key your microphone and speak. When you release it, you should hear a recording of your transmission. This allows you to hear your transmission as others do. Pressing # will release the test mode. Not releasing it will cause every transmission to be played back.

11. Other codes.

The repeater controller provides several other functions. The most popular are the time and temperature responses. Pressing 66 provides the temperature just outside the repeater building. Pressing 77 gives the time as seen by the control system. Accuracy is not one of the strong points with the time report. There is no need to release these modes.

The Amateur's Code

The Radio Amateur is:

CONSIDERATE...never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL...offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

PROGRESSIVE...with knowledge abreast of science, a well-built and efficient station and operation above reproach.

FRIENDLY...slow and patient operating when requested; friendly advice and counsel to the beginner; kindly assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

BALANCED...radio is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

PATRIOTIC...station and skill always ready for service to country and community.

The original Amateur's Code was written by Paul M Segal, W9EEA, in 1928.