

Review of simple VHF/UHF Repeater operating procedures

A repeater is a shared resource, sort of like a giant conference call party line. Here are some basic operational procedures that Hams have generally agreed on so everyone can make the most of sharing a repeater:

- LISTEN first to see if the repeater is in use to avoid interrupting a contact in progress.
- If after listening you are not sure the repeater is in use, you can always key the mike and say
 “Is the repeater in use (say your call sign here)”
 Always give your call sign!
- If you're satisfied the repeater is not actively in conversation simply press the mike key and say:
 “(your call sign) monitoring” or “(your call sign) listening”.
- If someone comes back to you they will probably say “(your call sign) followed by (their call sign)”. Try to remember their call sign so you can reply. If you didn't happen to catch their full call sign, try to remember a few letters so you can at least reply with “(the W6 calling me – please repeat your call, this is (your call sign))”.
- Normally reply by saying “(Their call sign)” followed by “(your call sign)”. It is good to learn to use phonetics, i.e.- Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, etc to occasionally help in clearing up mis-communication caused by static or other reasons. Phonetics will also clarify letters that sound the same, e.g.- c and z, b, d, e, etc. For example, the call sign K6CZ would be made unambiguous by saying “Kilo 6 Charlie Zulu”.

Note: When replying to someone, or calling someone, or turning the conversation over to someone or a group, your call sign is always given last.

- Having established contact you may engage in conversation. Be sure to key the mike for periods that do not exceed 2 minutes at a time. Less is better. The reason for this is many repeaters have a “Time Out” feature and will shut itself off and reset if someone talks too long on one single transmission. The Time Out feature is to protect the repeater from someone who may inadvertently have the mike keyed permanently. Mobile Hams have at times unknowingly pinched a mike on a car seat, keying it for long periods.
- During a conversation, when the other Ham turns the conversation over to you, it is good practice to delay keying your mike for a few seconds to allow someone to break-in should they have an emergency, or to request travel assistance, or otherwise request to use the repeater.
- It is not necessary or recommended to give your call at the end of every short transmission during a repeater conversation. The rules do require you to give your call at least every 10 minutes and at the end of a contact. This can be done simply by saying “(give your call sign) for ID”. Remember the rules also require you to give your call sign at the end of a conversation.
- At the end of your contact, you have the choice of continuing to monitor or signing clear from the repeater. At your last transmission of the conversation, give the other Ham's callsign followed by your callsign and say “Monitoring” if you remain on the repeater or “Clear” if you are leaving the repeater.

Simplex operation (talking directly with other Hams on a single frequency without going through a repeater) will have similar procedures. Simplex transmissions however will not have a time limit since there is no repeater involved.

Check out AC6V's *FM101x – FM Repeater Reference Guide* for more info. 73, K6OU