

Hannibal Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
VHF Repeater Guidelines and Good Operating Practices:

All amateur radio operators are welcome to use the Hannibal Amateur Radio Club, Inc. 2 meter repeaters. The rules that govern our service require good amateur operating practices. Our club membership, the repeater board, and the trustee have approved the following guidelines and repeater operating practices. We encourage you to follow these guidelines when using our club's repeaters. This will make the use of our repeaters more enjoyable for everyone.

Use plain English and avoid jargon. Use plain language on a repeater. There is no need to use slang or jargon. FM repeater communication is essentially as clear as a telephone call. Q-signals, pro signs and phonetics are not necessary for most FM operation.

Content of communications. We are all familiar with types of communications which the FCC rules prohibit, such as music, codes and ciphers, criminal activity, false signals, broadcasting, retransmitting radio signals, and obscenity and indecency.

While we support freedom of speech, we need to remember that there are many listeners of all ages who monitor our repeaters. Our language should be courteous and sensitive to the considerations of all listeners, free of expletives, and suitable for family conversations. Use language suitable for prime-time television, not R rated movies.

We also ask all users to avoid on-the-air conflicts about controversial topics. If the debate starts getting vehement, change the subject, or continue it off-the-air. For many years, hams have followed a "rule of thumb" that it is not a good idea to discuss sex, religion, and politics over the air.

Identify correctly. FCC rules require a station to identify every ten minutes and at the end of a QSO. Repeating the other station's call sign and your call sign following every transmission is not necessary. Never transmit without identifying.

Making contact with another station. If the repeater is quiet, just sign your call or say your call followed by the word "listening." Anyone on the frequency will know that you are willing to accept calls from any other station. Nothing else is necessary. Don't call CQ to begin a conversation on a repeater.

If you're in conversation, a brief pause before you begin each transmission allows other stations to break in – there could be an emergency. Don't key your

microphone as soon as someone releases theirs. If your exchanges are too quick, you can prevent other stations from getting in.

To join a conversation in progress, transmit your call sign during the pause between transmissions. The station that transmits next will usually acknowledge you. If you are in the midst of a conversation and another station transmits his or her call sign between transmissions, the next station in line to transmit should acknowledge the new station and permit the new arrival to make a call or join in the conversation. It is impolite not to acknowledge new stations, or to acknowledge them but not let them speak. The calling station may need to use the repeater immediately, so let him or her make a transmission promptly. Don't use the word "break" to join a conversation, unless you need to use the repeater to help in an **emergency**.

Testing and signal reports. If you are unsure how well you are making it into the repeater, DO NOT kerchunk the repeater. Any time you key up the repeater, you should identify, even if you are just testing to see if you are making the machine. Keying the repeater without identifying is illegal. Do not use the repeater as a "target" for tuning or aiming antennas, checking your transmitter power, etc. Use a dummy load where appropriate, or test on a simplex frequency. If you need someone to verify that you are making the repeater OK, ask for a "signal report."

Emergencies. To make a distress call over a repeater, say "break, break" or "break for priority traffic" and then your call sign to alert all stations to stand by while you deal with the emergency. DO NOT USE THE WORD BREAK TO JOIN IN A QSO UNLESS THERE IS AN EMERGENCY! All stations should give immediate priority to any station with emergency traffic.

Usage. Keep transmissions on the repeater as short as possible, so more people can use the repeater. Be considerate of other users, and don't tie up the repeater unnecessarily for long periods of time. Don't overuse the repeater – it is a shared resource. The repeater is not a soapbox. If you've been using the repeater for quite a while, consider getting off and letting others have an opportunity to use it, or if possible, move your conversation to a simplex frequency.

The best way to determine if you are able to communicate with the other station on simplex is to listen to the repeater input frequency. If you can hear the other station's signals there, you should be able to use simplex.

If other amateurs are asking to make calls during a QSO, it is a very good indication that there are other users waiting to use the repeater. Even if there are not other stations asking to make calls during a QSO, or if other users are invited to break in but chose not to, there is still a very good possibility that there are other users waiting for the QSO to end so they can make a call. Many amateurs

are reluctant to interrupt an ongoing QSO to make a call; they may feel that the call they want to make is no more important than the QSO already in progress.

Being a wide-coverage system, many mobile stations and travelers use the system to communicate over a wide distance while on the road. The WØKEM repeaters have been built at considerable expense and hard work to provide this wide-area service. One of the purposes of our repeaters is to expand the range of mobile and hand-held transceivers.

WØKEM is NOT a closed repeater system. It is an open, user-friendly and visitor-friendly system. Local and visiting amateurs who are not members of the Hannibal ARC are welcome to use our repeaters. Those who use our repeaters frequently are encouraged to consider joining our club or making a donation to help support our repeaters.

Shutdowns. A control operator may shut off the repeater either due to a violation of the WØKEM repeater policies, violations of FCC regulations, or flagrant disregard for "good amateur practice". A shutdown should be taken as a hint that something was wrong, either with the conversation or with the operating practices. Shutdowns are often done in lieu of direct personal intervention by a control operator as it avoids the situation from becoming a personal confrontation.

For more information about the use of FM repeaters, we encourage you to read an excellent article on the ARRL web site entitled "Repeaters – what are they and how to use them." <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/pdf/repeater1.pdf> . Some of the material in these guidelines was obtained from the ARRL article, and used by permission.

If you have any questions about the Hannibal Amateur Radio Club, Inc. repeaters, feel free to contact any member of the repeater board or Cliff Ahrens K0CA, the trustee of the club call WØKEM.