

The CCARC Repeater Rules Of Conduct

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Why do we need rules at all for repeater conduct or etiquette?

No one likes a bunch of arbitrary rules, but when you have a shared resource, like a wide coverage range repeater they become necessary. We tend to assume that everyone knows the generally accepted rules. But, that could be careless of us and unfair to those who want or need to have a clearer definition of our expectations and requirements. It can also create discord when repeater users offend others by unknowingly breaking some unwritten rule. Activities that may be an irritation or even a flagrant violation to one person might not be an issue at all to another. It's probably best for us to be clear about the rules we really think are important.

We understand that everyone slips once in a very great while, no matter how hard they try. But, we expect all users of the Columbia County Amateur Radio Club repeaters to do their very best to follow these few simple and obvious rules of repeater conduct. Conduct on the repeaters should be governed by common sense and courtesy.

1. Always identify according to the regulations.

Correct 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 really know what they are doing. A friendly style is great, but takes pains to operate professionally. Don't become sloppy. Amateur Radio regulations are largely self-enforced and we all need to work together towards these goals.

2. Avoid lengthy conversations

Please limit conversations to 15 or 20 minutes and then take a good long break. If you need more time for your conversation then move to another frequency. Other hams probably 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. Be polite, and don't be a "repeater hog."

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 on the repeater that is a thinly disguised broadcast. 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 and listeners. 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, racial or ethnic groups, political groups, or individuals. This goes back to the old saying, "If you can't say something nice, then don't say anything at all."

While not prohibited, users should avoid controversial discussions on inappropriate subjects including politics, sex and religion! Don't use the repeaters to "put people down." Amateur Radio is not a broadcast medium – FCC 97.113(5)(b). **Bigoted, racists, sexists, threatening, religiously intolerant, homophobic, and other incitful comments are prohibited on the CCARC repeaters.**

Are we talking about censorship? No, not exactly. 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 CCARC 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 purpose is to satisfy regulation FCC 97.213(b) requiring us to limit repeater transmissions to several minutes under automatic control. 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. Always remember there may be an *emergency*, someone may need the repeater. Please listen for the beep, wait a few seconds then continue!

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.

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 *normal*. Talk just like you would to someone in person. There's nothing different about talking over the radio. Using slang jargon just labels a person as an ex-CBer.

Using any of the "Q" codes is just about as bad, but is generally overlooked. QSY, QRT, QSL, QTH. Please don't use phonetics for every letter you need to say. For example: "The handle here is Hollingsworth, Hotel, Oscar, Lima, Lima, India, November, George, Sierra, Whiskey, Oscar, Romeo, Tango, Hotel, QSL?, the home QTH is in Manchester, Mike, Alpha, November....."

You are talking on an FM repeater not a station in Europe on 80 Meter sideband. Just talk *normal*.

6. Always yield the frequency to a breaking station

When attempting to break into a conversation on the repeater, please follow this procedure. If you have an Emergency interrupt the conversation by saying "BREAK BREAK". The talking stations should immediately recognize this as an Emergency, and turn the repeater over to you. If you just desire to join the conversation or make a comment, interrupt by giving your call. Always yield the frequency to an ARES/SKYWARN net, whether it is a practice net or not.

7. Selling other items OTHER than ham related equipment

Obviously selling any ham equipment is allowed as long as it's not done on a regular basis as a business. The advertising of vehicles, products, toys, or other non-ham related equipment and discussing prices is absolutely unacceptable on the repeater and will not be tolerated (use your phone).

8. 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 and a good group of people to get to know - 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.

Think about CB. The government tolerates the language on CB partly because they only use a few kilohertz of spectrum. It's not a huge waste. Amateur Radio, on the other hand, uses a lot of valuable spectrum. **There needs to be a noticeable difference between Amateur Radio and the CB world.** Don't let our activities on the air become a weapon in the hands of people who want to discredit us. Let's all do our part to give Amateur Radio a positive image.

We want any ham or non-ham that listens to us to think of us as good operators, not idiots. Any time we talk on the repeater, we are ambassadors for the hobby. Have you ever noticed how you like to listen to some repeaters, but sometimes you find a repeater that makes you roll your eyes and twist the knob? We lose good people because of what they hear on our repeaters.

The CCARC rule is simple: absolutely ***no*** obscene, indecent, threatening, or profane language at any time.

9. If you hear stations jamming or interfering do not make any comment.

If you can override the interference, continue with your conversation. If you can not continue, sign off the repeater in a normal manner. If you hear what you believe to be **DELIBERATE INTERFERENCE, do not attempt to communicate with the interfering station.** Switch to the repeater input frequency and, if you can hear the signal, record the following information for use in locating the source: 1) signal strength, 2) your location, 3) date and time, 4) your antenna and receiver, and 5) any characteristics of the rf, audio or voice that might help in identification. Report this information to a member of the Board of Directors or club official. **DO NOT DISCUSS** interference incidents on the air. If you attempt to engage these violators you will only give them what they are looking for – attention. Ignore them and they will go away.

What gives the CCARC the right to tell someone how to operate?

All repeaters have rules. These rules often go beyond Part 97. And, users who refuse to comply with the repeater's rules can be told to stop using the repeaters. This is entirely at the judgment of the repeater trustees.

Rule 97.205(e) says, "...Limiting the use of a repeater to only certain user stations is permissible." There are no qualifications – ifs, ands, or buts – to this rule. This isn't just the right to close a repeater. In fact, the ARRL says, "...a repeater does not have to be listed as being "closed" in *The ARRL Repeater Directory* in order to have a limited access." (Source: *The ARRL's FCC Rule Book*) The terms "open" and "closed" don't appear in the regulations at all! Listing a repeater as "open" means you don't have to be a member in order to use it. But, you still must follow the rules of the repeater.

Here is our policy: the CCARC repeaters are open for all to use, ***provided you follow the 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, that person has every right to revoke your privilege of using it!" (Source: *The ARRL's FCC Rule Book*)

Each station owner is responsible for the operation of their equipment. They must always meet the FCC defined rules, and may also implement a more stringent set of rules for the operation of their equipment. To use our repeaters you must follow our rules. There are repeaters with more lenient rules than ours are and some which are much more restrictive. Beyond the FCC minimum requirements, it's up to each repeater owner to set

their own operating rules. A repeater user needs to try to fit in. If the rules for the CCARC repeaters are uncomfortable for you and do not suit your personal needs or style we encourage you to try other repeaters or even try talking on simplex.

We wish for everyone willing to abide by these simple rules to freely use our repeaters. We welcome you and hope you have many enjoyable conversations on the repeaters of the Columbia County Amateur Radio Club. 73!