

Repeater Etiquette on West Michigan System Fusion

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has created rules and regulations that govern amateur radio. [These rules and regulations are listed](#) in Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter I, Subchapter D, Part 97 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Hams usually call these the “Part 97” rules. Those rules discuss what hams are legally allowed to do.

However, just because you can do it, doesn’t mean that you should do it. Learning what you should do usually takes a number of years and involves a lot of hard lessons. In an attempt to help learn these lessons quicker, we have created this repeater etiquette guide.

Repeaters allow us to amplify our signal to allow others to hear our voices. Wires-X repeaters, and all others, typically have hundreds of people listening at all times. This could be hams, family members of hams, people listening to scanners, city officials, or people listening on the Internet rebroadcast or recording, anywhere on the planet. When you are heard on a repeater your performance should be representative of the host club.

Follow these guidelines and you will quickly become a better operator.

Protocol

- Take time to listen to the repeater for a while before you transmit. If you are new to the area, listen to get a feel for the operation of the locals. Otherwise, listen for at least 30 seconds to make sure you aren’t barging into a conversation.
- To transmit, key your microphone, wait for a second, and then start talking. Repeaters and receivers have a built-in delay that may chop off the first few syllables of your statement. Hold the button firmly while you are talking. Be sure to let go of the button when you are finished.
- Transmit your callsign when you start talking. This lets the other people listening know who you are. While the person you are talking to may know your voice, others listening may not.
- If you wish to announce that you are listening to the repeater and are willing to converse, give your callsign and the words “listening” or “monitoring.” Stay on the channel for at least a minute because others may take a while to respond. CQ is not used on repeaters.
- To call another station, transmit their callsign and then your callsign. Be sure to pause before you start talking. If you get no response, make this call again. If you still get no response, simply transmit your callsign and the words “clear”, or “listening”, or “monitoring”.
- Resist the urge to quickly key to respond to a transmission. Provide a brief pause between transmissions to allow others to join in. People breaking into a conversation will transmit their call sign when the current operator unkeys.
- Promptly acknowledge any stations that transmit their call and permit them to either join the conversation or make a quick call.

- You do not need to wait for the repeater transmitter to drop.
- Commuting hours are popular for many mobile stations. Repeaters exist to help extend the range of mobiles and portables. Be courteous and give them priority during commuting hours.
- *Do not “kerchunk” a repeater by clicking the microphone button to see if you are in range. If you need to range check your radio, key the microphone, transmit your callsign, and then wait for the repeater to respond.*
- To ask for a radio check, key your microphone, transmit your callsign, and then the words “radio check”. More often than not, you’ll get someone to respond.
- If you are in an emergency situation, use the word “emergency”. You will get a much better response than if you use other codewords. When someone responds, keep them informed of your situation until you announce that the emergency is over.

Language

- Watch what you say when you key your microphone. Speak as if your mother is in the room. Avoid ‘mild’ obscenities, including suggestive phrases and innuendos.
- Speak as if you were talking to someone face-to-face.
- Don’t use the word “break” to join a conversation. If you want to be involved, simply transmit your callsign. Some regions reserve the word “break” for announcing an emergency.
- Use plain language and avoid jargon or acronyms that may be prominent in your ‘day-job’, or on HF. Others may not fully understand what your acronym means.

Topics

- Do not monopolize the repeater. If others turn off their radios because they can hardly talk to someone except you, something is wrong.
- Be upbeat and courteous. Don’t be the guy that’s always complaining about other hams, the repeater, or some aspect of the hobby.
- **Do not discuss the topics of politics, religion, or make disparaging remarks.** While you and the person you are talking to may share certain beliefs, there are hundreds of other listeners that probably have differing opinions. Typically this results in hams turning off their radios and reduces group participation.
- If you frequently receive jamming interference, it may be a sign that you may need to adjust your use of the repeater. This isn’t always the case, but history has shown that jammers respond to those that have caused the most friction.

Operation

- Don’t cough, sneeze, or clear your throat on-the-air. Unkey the microphone as you feel these coming on.

- If you hear someone trying to “jam” a transmission, or disrupt the normal repeater operation, ignore them. These people are looking for attention and typically go away if ignored. “Please don’t feed the trolls.”
- If you feel that you need to interrupt an existing conversation, remember it is no more polite to do so on the air than if you did it face-to-face.
- Follow a roundtable, or rotation format to allow 3 or more hams to participate in a conversation. Don’t ignore people by not passing to them for several turns.
- *Perform your legally required station identifications every 10 minutes. Use the repeater timer, or the other station as your guide.*
- Using the phrase “for ID” with your callsign is not required, or encouraged.
- Perform your legally required station identification at the end of your conversation. Simply give your callsign. You do not need to repeat the callsign of the other operators.
- Don’t use any CB phrases, slang, or verbiage. Use plain language.
- Respond to calls that you aren’t familiar with. It’s a great way to meet new people and hear new stories. They may be a new ham, or new to the area, and are looking for a conversation.