



Repeater Operations and Etiquette

Repeaters serve to extend the operating range of portable and mobile stations on VHF/UHF. Here are some operating guidelines for your consideration:

- Use simplex wherever possible. Using repeaters to make contacts between two *fixed* stations should be an exception.
- Use the minimum amount of power to maintain communications. In general, you don't need 60 watts to access a repeater.
- Listen – Listen – *Listen*
Each repeater is a different kingdom and may have some rules—written and unwritten—about its operation.
- A repeater has a “time out” feature that will turn off its transmitter if it's on too long. Carrollton's machines are set for **three (3) minutes**. Pay attention to how long you talk so as not to “time out.”
- To initiate a contact, simply announce you are on frequency. “This is KC4USA monitoring (or listening)” will suffice.
- Do not *kerchunk* (key up without ID). This is not only annoying, it's illegal.
- If the repeater is already in use, wait for a pause between transmissions to announce your call.
- Identify legally. You must ID at the end of a transmission or series of transmissions, and at least once every 10 minutes. That's the rule.
- As you should with all phone communications, **use plain language**. Specifically, avoid:
 - using “10” calls. Leave these to public service and CB operators.
 - using “Q” signals. These were developed by telegraphers but are popular in phone contacts. However, they are easily misunderstood and *not recommended*.
- Avoid saying, “This is KC4USA for ID.” The only reason you give your call is for ID, so saying “...for ID” is redundant.
- To avoid doubling (simultaneous transmission) and to allow time for new stations to identify, pause until its carrier drops out. Some repeaters feature a beep tone to indicate its readiness. Pausing also allows the timer to reset.
- Do not monopolize the repeater. Be aware that others may want to use the repeater, so be obliging.
- Use the term “break” or even better, “break-break-break” **only** in emergency or life-threatening situations. Better still is to say “Break, break, break with emergency traffic.”
- Keep your contacts short and to the point.
- Don't break into a contact unless you have something significant to add.
- Interrupting is no more polite on the air than it is in person.
- Interrupting a conversation without ID is not correct and in principle, constitutes illegal interference.
- Repeaters are installed and maintained at considerable expense and effort. If you frequently use a particular machine, consider supporting (yes, that probably means financially) those that keep it on the air.

Sources:

The ARRL Operating Manual for Radio Amateurs, 8th edition, The American Radio Relay League
Ethics and Operating Procedures for the Radio Amateur, 3rd edition, The International Amateur Radio Union