

# “Standard operating procedures and guidelines”

There are times when guidelines for doing various things in life must be reviewed in order to keep things running smooth. Some folks may still insist rules are made to be broken, while others insist that rule's must be followed at all times.

We are not perfect thus we do make occasional slips. Some newcomers to the frequencies want very much to do right in the eyes of their peers, so much so that some don't even get on the air for fear of doing something wrong. **They sit back and listen to the more experienced operator and try to establish in their own mind what the correct procedures and protocols are.** They know the regulations specify what is right and what is wrong, but nothing is mentioned about correct operating procedures. The theory classes of today are shortened and do not cover proper procedures and protocols, so, to help the new amateurs and yes, some of the older ones to learn what classes don't teach, and to remind the rest of us how it should be done, here are some comments on using the amateur frequencies.

## Setting an example

We have all at times slipped into some poor operating habits unknowingly. Maybe it's time that we all take a few moments to think of what we say and how we say it. Have we just become lazy and comfortable with our sloppy procedures and don't even realize we're doing it? It becomes a subconscious action and things like shortened call signs, bad slang such as, damn, hell, etc., are part of our vocabulary. Yes, these words are used on television and public radio, but do we really need to express ourselves in this manner on our radios?

Non-hams who may ride in our vehicles, or listen to us on scanners, **are unlikely** to get excited about ham radio if they hear this unimpressive slang. **Young people already know these words and if they pursue this great hobby why should we give them the impression that language of this nature is commonly accepted?** We reap what we sow. Therefore, the following points will make amateur radio a better space to listen to.

## The meaning of “break”

The word "**Break**" has four different and very specific meanings in amateur radio. **Break should never be used when you simply want to join a conversation in progress. Use your call sign for that.**

1. The first use of the word **break** is separate parts of one message, such as

separating the address from the text, during the same transmission, W5RXU, this is K5WTH, message from EOC to Number One Fire Station. BREAK. Ambulance will arrive at 16:35. BREAK. Over.

2. The second use of the word **break** is to terminate a message with one station and start a message to another during the same transmission. W5RXU, K5WTH, message received. BREAK. N5XFW, has the water truck arrived?"
3. The third use of **break** is to interrupt an ongoing conversation with traffic of a higher priority. The frequency should be released immediately to the station calling break.
4. The fourth and most critical use of **break** is when someone calls “break-break” or “break emergency”. This indicates emergency traffic. All other stations **must** release the frequency **immediately** and stand by to assist if necessary.

## Using repeaters and HF bands

The following are a few procedures and protocols that should be remembered and used.

1. Listen to the frequency for a few seconds before initiating a call. The repeater or band may be busy with someone momentarily standing by.
2. If the repeater or band is not busy and you wish to use the frequency, give your call sign and say “monitoring.” After releasing the PTT anyone wishing to speak with you will come back with their call sign. If no one responds to your call, do not continue repeating your call sign. This is redundant and very annoying to others. There may be people monitoring who don't wish to speak with you at this time. You may try again later in case someone else comes on to monitor that may wish to speak with you.
3. Identify yourself at the beginning and end of a contact, and every 10 minutes during the contact. Remember to use full call signs, partial call signs are illegal.
4. As a general rule you should give mobile stations priority over base stations, especially during rush hour. The mobile station may be asking for directions or reporting traffic congestion.
5. . If you want to join an established conversation don't use the word “Break”, which has specific meanings as mentioned above. To enter into a conversation insert your full call sign between transmissions. This will then be acknowledged by those using the frequency.
6. A repeater or HF frequency that is in use during a public service event or

during an emergency situation should not be accessed while this is in progress. If necessary, contact the net control station for permission to call for your station and move them to another frequency. Keeping the re frequency clear during these events can make the difference during life threatening situations.

7. Profane or obscene language is not permitted. Correct procedures and protocols should be used at all times you are transmitting. This also applies to all voice frequencies within our amateur bands. **The use of “Q” codes such as, QSL, QSO, QTH, QRT, etc.) should be reserved for CW conversations and CW nets.** It is much easier to say what you really mean in the first place.

8. When checking into voice nets don't use the word “Break” unless you have Priority or Emergency traffic. All that is required for getting the net controller's attention is a simple transmission of your call sign.

9. Never check into a net and then leave without first notifying net controller. The net control station may have traffic for you at a later time. It is really frustrating when a Net Controller calls you and you've left the frequency.

10. Last but not least, let's have fun on our amateur radio repeaters and the HF bands. They can become very useful during emergencies and disasters, as well as bringing much enjoyment to new amateurs traveling through our locations.

## Using “lingo”

Many new hams come from the General Radio Service, more commonly known as CB, bringing with them their own jargon that is not used on the Amateur Radio bands. Most CB lingo is obnoxious or obscene. Things like “10-4” or “10-20” aren't objectionable; however these terms are just not used in amateur radio. It's these little differences that set us apart from CB or commercial radio communications. The preferred ham radio jargon is only reasonable to expect from a service that has been proud to be distinguishable from the other services.

However, don't use jargon when simple English will do. A prime example is saying “I've destinated” instead of “I've arrived at my destination.” **Destinated is not a word!**

Now with all of that said, just think about all of the different operating habits on the air and no wonder the newer ham's are confused! He or she is told that the correct procedure is one thing, yet hears the Elmers of ham radio doing the complete opposite. You Elmers in amateur radio don't realize how much you are being observed and listened to and what example you are setting.