

KAMP Dovetail Radio Etiquette

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This document provides hints and tips for efficient and effective radio communication using the radio equipment provided by S.A.T.H. during the week of KAMP Dovetail and at other S.A.T.H. sponsored events. The basis of this document is common amateur radio FM repeater etiquette published by the American Radio Relay League modified for use on the “private” simplex frequency utilized by the S.A.T.H. Radio equipment.

Operation Etiquette:

- Listen, Listen, Listen. The first rule of using a shared radio system is listening. Listen for at least 60 seconds to be sure the frequency is clear before starting a new conversation.
- Keep your radio on during the day and keep it in a location that allows you to hear it. It is important to listen to your radio even if you are not actively involved in a conversation. You never know when someone may call for you.
- Use a tactical call sign or handle to identify yourself. Licensed radio operators identify themselves using the call sign on their license. Most people operating the S.A.T.H. Equipment will not be licensed operators. It will therefore be necessary to use what are referred to as tactical call signs or handles. A tactical call sign or handle should be short, descriptive, and unique to a particular radio station. First names or locations are excellent for this purpose. When there is more than one person with the same first name, full names should be used.
- If you hear a conversation in progress wait for that conversation to end before starting a new conversation of your own. A conversation has ended when each station involved in the conversation has given their tactical call sign or handle followed by the word “clear”.
- If you hear a conversation in progress it is OK to join the conversation if you have something relevant to add. It is not OK to interrupt the conversation in order to change the subject or start a new conversation with someone else.
- If you wish to join an existing conversation wait for the transmitting station to hand-off and “break” in by quickly transmitting your tactical call sign or handle. Wait for an acknowledgment from a station already engaged in the conversation. If you do not receive an acknowledgment you may attempt a second break. If you still do not receive acknowledgment do not attempt any further breaks and wait for the current conversation to complete.
- If you have emergency traffic and need to interrupt an existing conversation wait for the transmitting station to hand-off and “break” in by quickly transmitting the actual word “break”. The word “break” should only be used when you need to interrupt an existing conversation with EMERGENCY traffic. Wait for acknowledgment and then quickly announce the nature of your emergency. Give the other stations time to “clear” the frequency and then proceed with your emergency traffic.
- Keep your overall conversation and individual transmissions as short as possible. You should keep your individual transmissions to less than 60 seconds. If you need to conduct a lengthy conversation you may initiate your conversation on the S.A.T.H. radio but should switch to an alternate medium like a cell phone or personal FRS radio as soon as possible.
- Once you are engaged in a conversation and you have completed a transmission hand-off the conversation. If there are only 2 stations involved in the conversation you can simply use the word “over” to indicate you are done. If there are more than 2 stations involved in the conversation use the phrase “over to you” followed by the tactical call sign or handle of the station that should be transmitting next.
- Never curse or use obscenities. Never discuss indecent or inappropriate topics. The S.A.T.H. radio equipment uses a “private” radio frequency but keep in mind that nothing transmitted via radio is private! You never know who might be listening. S.A.T.H. radio equipment may be issued to operators that aren’t directly involved in S.A.T.H. events and the frequency can easily be monitored by any common radio scanner.

- Once your conversation has ended and you have completed your final transmission be sure to “clear” the frequency by giving your tactical call sign or handle followed by the word “clear”. Every station involved in the conversation should perform this step.
- If you hear a call for a station that you are certain can not answer report back to the calling station with that information. If you can contact the requested station via alternate means offer your services as a relay. If you are within physical proximity of the requested station offer the temporary use of your radio.
- Remember to wait at least a second after pressing the transmit button (also known as keying the radio) before you actually begin talking. It takes a brief moment for the radio to actually begin transmitting and part of your transmission could be lost if you don’t wait.

Care and Maintenance:

- If you sign out a radio or are assigned a radio it becomes your responsibility to ensure that radio is signed back in or returned to the appropriate place when you no longer need it. Loaning your radio or re-assigning your radio without authorization does not absolve you of this responsibility.
- If you are assigned spare batteries use only the batteries assigned to you. If you find that your spare batteries do not provide adequate transmitting time then contact the person in charge of radio maintenance. Do not arbitrarily take someone else’s spare battery.
- If spare batteries are assigned to a battery rotation, be sure you understand which charger to remove a battery from, how to shift the batteries, and which charger to place your dead battery in. Failure to properly follow the rotation process could result in everyone having dead batteries.
- It is not necessary to return your radio at the end of the day. You may keep your radio with you. Turn the radio off at night. The radios are used at night and you could be in for a rude awakening if you leave yours on.
- If you do return your radio at night ensure that you get the same radio in the morning. Your radio may be temporarily re-assigned at night. If your radio ends up missing contact the person in charge of radio maintenance. Do not take someone else’s radio.
- Do not replace your battery until your battery is dead. Do not replace your battery every morning or as a matter of convenience. Prematurely replacing your battery will shorten the overall life of the battery you just replaced. This also shortens the charging time available to spare batteries.
- Report any issues with your radio, any accessories, or any charging station right away to the person in charge of radio maintenance. Reporting issues quickly could help us avoid costly equipment repairs or even total equipment loss. Do not continue to use a damaged or problematic radio unless instructed to do so by the person in charge of radio maintenance.