

Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Repeater Rules and Guidelines

1. Purpose

The Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club (LVARC) was started in 1928, making it one of the oldest ham radio clubs in the area. As well as being a club related to ham radio, the LVARC is a social club and members serve the public by providing communications support for many community events.

Our repeaters support that service philosophy by providing a controlled radio communications environment for club members and mobile operators in the Lehigh Valley. While primarily operating for club members, nets and emergency communications, licensed operators, particularly those in mobile operation, may use our facilities as long as they observe the rules of our repeaters (below), general regulations of the FCC, and give precedence to club members, mobiles, nets and emergency operations.

The LVARC has close ties to and works closely with, the Lehigh County Emergency Management Agency, RACES and ARES

2. Usage Guidelines

1. **Usage.** Repeaters are primarily intended to facilitate mobile communications. The order of priority on the repeater system is, in decreasing order, as follows: emergency traffic, directed nets, member traffic, mobile traffic, and non-member traffic. Emergency traffic has priority over anything else. Members have priority on the system at all other times, and as such, non-members should avoid tying up the system for extended lengths of time. QSO's should be limited to 20 minutes whenever possible.
2. **Starting a QSO via a directed call.** There are two main ways by which a QSO can begin, one is via a directed call and one is via monitoring. A directed call is where one amateur calls another amateur individually. It generally is not an invitation for anyone other than the station being called to return the call.
3. **Starting a QSO via a monitoring call.** The second way to begin a QSO is to simply state your callsign followed by "listening" or "monitoring. Calling CQ on a repeater is generally not common. There is no need to repeat the "listening" message over and over again as you might do when calling CQ on HF. Once every few minutes should be more than sufficient, and if someone hasn't answered after a few tries, it probably means there is nobody around.
4. **Joining a QSO in progress.** If there is a conversation taking place which you would like to join, simply state your callsign when one user unkeys. This is the reason for having a courtesy tone: to allow other users to break into the conversation. One of the stations in QSO, usually the station that was about to begin his transmission, will invite you to join, either before making his own

transmission. Don't interrupt a member QSO unless you have something to add to the topic at hand. Interrupting a conversation is no more polite on a repeater than it is in person.

5. **Interrupting a QSO to make a call.** If you need to make a directed call to another amateur but there is already another QSO going on, break into the conversation during the courtesy tone interval by saying "Call please, [state your callsign]". One of the stations will allow you to make your call. If the station you are calling returns your call, you should quickly pass traffic to them and relinquish the frequency to the stations already in QSO; don't get into a full QSO in the middle of someone else's conversation. If you need to speak with the party you call for a significant length of time (say, more than 15 seconds), ask them to either wait until the current QSO has cleared, or ask them to move to another repeater or simplex channel to continue the conversation.
6. **Roundtables and "Turning it Over".** When more than two amateurs are in a QSO, it is often referred to as a "roundtable" discussion. Such a QSO usually goes in order from amateur A to amateur B to amateur C and eventually back to amateur A again to complete the roundtable. To keep everyone on the same page, when any one amateur is done making a transmission, they "turn it over" to the next station in sequence (or out of sequence, if so desired). Without turning it over to a particular station when there are multiple stations in the QSO, nobody knows who is supposed to go next, and there ends up either being dead silence or several stations talking at once. At the end of a transmission, turn it over to the next station by naming them or giving their callsign, such as "...and that's that. Go ahead Joe." or "...and that's that. Go ahead [callsign]." If it's been close to 10 minutes, it's a good time to identify at the same time as well, such as "...and that's that. N3XYZ, go ahead Joe."
7. **Pause between transmissions.** Listen for others who may need to use the repeater. A three to four second pause between transmissions is adequate.
8. **IDing and Who's Who?** By FCC regulations, you must always identify at 10 minute intervals and at the end of a transmission. If you are making a test transmission or calling another party, this is a one-way transmission. Since it has no "length" as there is no QSO taking place, you should identify each time you make a call or a test transmission. When identifying yourself and another party (or parties), or when making a directed call, your callsign goes LAST. There is no need to identify each time you make a transmission, only once every 10 minutes. You do not need to identify the station with whom you are speaking, only your own callsign, but it is generally polite to remember the call of the other station. Avoid phonetics on FM unless there is a reason for using them, such as the other station misunderstanding your callsign. When phonetics are needed, stick to the standard phonetic alphabet. Although the FCC does not require station ID at the beginning of the QSO, the LVARC highly encourages the practice of providing an ID at the beginning of the QSO.
9. **Signal Reports and Kerchunking.** If you are unsure how well you are making it into the repeater, DO NOT kerchunk the repeater. Any time you key

up the repeater, you should identify, even if you are just testing to see if you are making the machine. "[Callsign] test" is sufficient. Do not use the repeater as a "target" for tuning or aiming antennas, checking your transmitter power, etc. Use a dummy load where appropriate, or test on a simplex frequency. If you need someone to verify that you are making the repeater OK, ask for a signal report such as "This is [Callsign], looking for a signal report?"

10. **Language.** Aside from some of the techno-syncretisms inherent in amateur vernacular, use plain conversational English. The kind of English that would be suitable for prime-time television, not R rated movies. Avoid starting or encouraging conflicts on the air. If a topic of conversation starts to draw strong debate, change the subject. Avoid radio lingo whenever possible. CB has its own language style and so does amateur radio, but the two are not the same. Amateurs have "names", not "personals". Some repeaters are very free-wheeling in that there are people jumping in and out of conversations constantly. Others primarily have directed calls on them and discourage rag-chewing. The Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club discourages long rag-chews (>20 min) on their repeaters.
11. **Emergencies.** If there is a QSO in progress, break into a conversation with the word "Break" or "Break for priority traffic." **DO NOT USE THE WORD BREAK TO JOIN IN A QSO UNLESS THERE IS AN EMERGENCY!** All stations will give immediate priority to any station with emergency traffic.
12. **Malicious Interference.** If there is malicious interference, such as kerchunking, touch-tones, rude comments, etc. **DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE IT!** Continue the QSO in a normal fashion. If the interference gets to the level where it is impossible to carry on the QSO, simply end the QSO as you normally would, log the time and date of the interference and notify a control operator off-the-air.
13. **Power.** Use the minimum power necessary to complete a QSO. However, if someone says that you are noisy, increase power or relocate or take whatever measures you can to improve your signal. Continuing to make transmissions after being told your signal is noisy is inconsiderate to those listening. If unable to maintain a clear signal, end your QSO with your call sign and attempt again when conditions improve. Without a good external antenna, operating a handheld radio indoors or inside a car is going to result in a lot of bad signal reports.
14. **Crossbanding.** Crossbanding is not allowed on LVARC repeaters without prior approval by LVARC Control Operators and Board Members. Crossbanding approval is mostly considered for special events and unusual circumstances.
15. **Control Operators.** The control operators have been entrusted with maintaining decorum on the system and ensuring operation within Part 97 regulations. If a control operator interrupts a QSO and identifies himself as "control", please allow them to pass whatever messages they need to or perform any control functions. The control operators have the final say in what is/is not appropriate on the repeater. If a control operator makes a comment or suggestion, take it as constructive criticism and then follow their

advice or directive. If you disagree with what a control operator says or does, contact a LVARC Board Member off the air and explain your concerns.

16. **Shutdowns.** A control operator may shut off the repeater either due to a violation of the LVARC network policies, violations of FCC regulations, or flagrant disregard for "good amateur practice". A shutdown should be taken as a hint that something was wrong, either with the conversation or with the operating practices. Shutdowns are often done in lieu of direct personal intervention by a control operator as it avoids the situation from becoming a personal confrontation.

3. Rule Violations

- a. FCC Part 97.205 (e) states "*limiting the use of a repeater to only certain user stations is permissible.*" There is no rule which requires a repeater owner or trustee to let everyone use it. Those who do not follow FCC rules and the rules set forth by the LVARC will be warned or banned from using LVARC Repeaters and may be subject to FCC enforcement action.
- b. The following actions will occur for those that violate FCC / LVARC rules:
 - i. Verbal Warning by Control Operator of unwelcome behavior. Control Operator will direct individual in question to the LVARC website to review LVARC operating procedures.
 - ii. Continued bad behavior will result in written certified letter banning operator from club repeater(s).
 - iii. Continued operation after being banned from LVARC Repeaters will result in notification to the FCC with request for enforcement action.