

GMRS Radio Cheat Sheet

General Radio Etiquette

1. Listen and wait for a pause in radio traffic before talking. (transmitting)
2. Hold down the push-to-talk (PTT) button and *wait 1 second* because your radio's transmitter may take that long to kick in.
 - a. Hold down the PTT button firmly for as long as you are speaking.
 - b. No one else can transmit while you are transmitting, so...
 - c. Say one thing only each time you transmit. *Don't ramble.*
3. Say the name of who you're calling 2-3 times, and then your own.
4. When you are done, say "Over" to indicate the other side can talk.
5. To break into a conversation, say "Break" and your name during a pause.
 - a. Say "Priority" if it's urgent, "Emergency" if it's an emergency.
6. Acknowledge the other side's transmission with "Copy" or "Roger".
7. When your conversation is over, say your name and then "Clear" to indicate that you're leaving the channel open for others to use.

Repeater Etiquette

A repeater is a shared resource for many radio operators. Keep conversations brief! Move longer conversations off the repeater ASAP.

1. Follow all the general radio etiquette rules!
2. Wait an extra second before talking; some repeaters have a courtesy tone you can hear that tells you when you can start talking.
3. State your FCC callsign at the beginning of your first transmission.
4. If necessary, exchange contact info with the person you're talking to: a non-repeater GMRS channel, a phone number, even a meeting place.
5. When you finish, release the PTT button and listen for the repeater to make the tone that says your transmission was successfully received.
6. Wait an extra second before speaking again, to give time for others to transmit to the repeater if they need to break in.

NATO Phonetic Alphabet

Alfa	Echo	India	Mike	Quebec	Uniform	Yankee
Bravo	Foxtrot	Juliett	November	Romeo	Victor	Zulu
Charlie	Golf	Kilo	Oscar	Sierra	Whiskey	
Delta	Hotel	Lima	Papa	Tango	X-Ray	

Getting Your License

Most GMRS users don't have a license. But you need one – and the callsign that comes with it – to get people to talk to you on repeaters. Get a 10-year license, for you and your whole family, by paying \$35 on the FCC website. We recommend giving them a PO box, etc., rather than your home address.

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GMRS Channel Info		
Channel	Range	Notes
1-7	Medium	Good for general use
8-14	Shortest	Use when all other channels are busy
15-22	Longest	General use, neighborhood nets, or <i>receiving from repeaters</i>
23-30	Longest	Only for <i>transmitting to</i> repeaters (if your radio supports it)
31+	N/A	Receiving only: AM/FM, NOAA weather, Ham, etc.

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Emergency Frequencies to Listen To	
Frequency	Notes
138.225MHz	FEMA channel for disaster relief operations
146.520MHz	National “calling” frequency for Ham radio
162.400 - 162.550MHz	NOAA weather channels; goes 162.400, 162.425, 162.45, 162.475, 162.500, 162.525, 162.550
163.4875	Emergency channel for the National Guard
168.550MHz	Federal civilian agency channel for emergencies/disasters
AM Radio	KCBS 740, KGO 810, 1590 KLIV
FM Radio	KQED 88.5, KALW 91.7, KSOL 98.9 (Spanish), KCBS 106.9

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If You Can't Hear or Reach Others

1. Confirm you are on the right channel and privacy tone, if any.
2. Ensure the antenna isn't blocked by your body or anything else.
3. Move away from metal, concrete, earthen hills, etc.
4. Check that your battery has power, that the antenna is screwed in, the microphone and/or speaker aren't dirty or clogged, etc.
5. Check your settings: Volume, transmit power (you usually want “high” or equivalent), squelch level (it may be set too high)
6. Move higher (“height is might”) and try for line of sight your contact.
7. Turn your radio off and on again.
8. Check your manual for information specific to your radio.

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