

It has come to my attention, as club trustee, and the one ultimately responsible for all traffic handled on the NSRA repeaters under the NS1RA call sign, that an incident recently occurred that could be considered a teachable moment.

So, I am going to take this opportunity to remind all of the folks that are members of our club, and those that use the repeaters frequently that certain guidelines exist for proper repeater etiquette.

This first section is a para-phrased excerpt from *Ethics and operating procedures for the radio amateur* published by the ARRL and available for download from their website.

ARRL Ethics and operating procedures for the radio amateur Excerpt Repeater Etiquette:

Repeaters serve in the first place to extend the operating range of portable and mobile stations on VHF/UHF.

If you want to talk via the repeater while it is already in use, wait for a pause between transmissions to announce your call.

Only use the term *BREAK*, or even better *BREAK BREAK BREAK* in an emergency or life-threatening situation. Better is to say *BREAK BREAK BREAK with emergency traffic*.

Stations using the repeater should pause until its carrier drops out or a beep appears, to avoid inadvertent *doubling* (simultaneous transmission) and to allow time for new stations to identify. Pausing usually also allows the timer to reset, avoiding a *time-out*.

Do not monopolize the repeater. Repeaters are there not only for you and your friends. Be conscious that others may want to use the repeater as well; be obliging.

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 identification is not correct and in principle illegal interference.

This next excerpt is from our own 'blue book' which is available to all NSRA members in the members section of the website. As a reminder, the blue book, (originally printed on blue paper) was originally given to all NSRA members when they initially enrolled in the club. This book has been around since the early formation of the club and its latest update was performed in 2005

NSRA Blue Book Excerpt Breaking

Unlike CB radio operation, in this area the use of the word "**BREAK**" is reserved for special situations. If a QSO is in progress, and an **IMPORTANT** message has to get to another station, use the word "BREAK", followed by your call sign, between transmissions. Breaking stations have priority, so you will immediately be acknowledged and invited to go ahead. At this time, say thanks, and state your purpose for breaking. Note that the word "BREAK" should **ONLY BE USED ONCE**.

The double break, or "**BREAK, BREAK**", followed by your call sign, is reserved for **EMERGENCY** use only, and requires all stations to stand by for EMERGENCY TRAFFIC pertaining to an accident or similar situation requiring immediate action. This would include Autopatches to police, fire, or other emergency agencies. **Avoid using a double break unless the situation is urgent.**

If there is personal injury, AND if there is an **IMMEDIATE THREAT** to life and property, you may use the NSRA equivalent of "Mayday", which is a triple break. "**BREAK, BREAK, BREAK**" (followed by your call sign) is of the utmost urgency, and a call for which ALL stations **WILL STAND BY** to assist. Use of this call is restricted to actual emergency situations where life is at stake.

In all breaking cases, be SURE to include your call sign. When acknowledged, pass your traffic as quickly as possible and move on, or feel free to include yourself in the activities on frequency. Don't forget though, you are joining an existing QSO.

Whenever a station breaks, or special traffic is being passed on the frequency, all stations not sending or receiving traffic **MUST STAND BY** and wait for ALL traffic to be completed, even if there is a delay in the activity.

As an additional reminder, one of the primary purposes of amateur radio use is for the ability to serve the public good in times of emergency, and, as ambassadors of amateur radio, our club has always been in the spotlight, so, our conduct is always under constant scrutiny.

As we strive to be good ambassadors, good communicators, and good citizens, we need to remember, that we all make mistakes from time to time, and, as long as we learn from our mistakes, we have not failed.

Our valuable spectrum faces constant threats from other services, legislature, and even the FCC itself. Any evidence we can use to support our continued need for the spectrum can be as valuable as gold. Any failure to exemplify our need can serve as fuel for those wishing to pre-empt our use of it. Let's be sure we only serve up the best possible fuel for our own existence.

Respectfully,

Lou Harris, N1UEC