

FRS Radio Tutorial

This document is prepared in an effort to help you become more familiar and comfortable using your FRS Two-way radio in the conduct of our Four Seasons EPC committee work and operating as a Street Captain or Division Commander.

- During an upcoming drill or during an actual emergency, always have your radio available and stored turned off with fresh alkaline batteries. Replace batteries every 6 months or if the radio is used extensively. Always have spare batteries to take with you during a drill or emergency. We do not recommend using rechargeable battery packs (I know they came with the radio) for emergency use – commercial power may not be available for recharging, battery life of the rechargeable battery – even if in good condition (they degrade if left in the charger too long) – is only 30% as long as alkaline batteries (AA or AAA depending on your radio).
- Prior to a drill beginning or if you believe the Net may have been activated, turn your radio on to Channel 4 and observe that a privacy tone 14 has been programmed. Due to a recent FCC rule change for FRS radios, we now can legally operate at high power, up to 2 watts, so always use high power as your ability to be received by Net Control or others is greatly improved, especially if you are in a building.
- When the Net is activated and you need to check in, **wait until the channel is clear** and press your PTT (push-to-talk) button in, hold it in for ½ second, then begin speaking while holding the button in. (If you don't do the ½ second thing, you will be “jumping the mic” and the first part of what you say will not be transmitted). Release the PTT when done talking and listen for Net Control to acknowledge they received your transmission or asks you to repeat your information. As an example, use the following format to check in: “Alpha 1 Webber checking in, all clear” (If you have critical information to relay, do so but if not, wait until everyone is checked in and Net Control gives you further instructions. **Always continue to leave radio on and monitor Channel 4 until the drill/emergency is over and you hear an announcement that the Net is closed!**
- After you have been told by Net Control you are checked in and your household and personnel are ok, begin your windshield pass, driving or walking your assigned area and with your size up form in hand, note addresses displaying a “Help needed” or “OK” sign in window. Note any

other unusual conditions in your assigned area and when completed, contact your Division Commander in the following manner: Initiating a transmission (call) on your radio is a little different than checking in. To contact your Division Commander in for example Division A once you have completed your windshield pass, wait for clear air on Channel 4, press your PTT and hold for ½ second, keep PTT held down and announce the following – “This is Alpha 1 Morrell to Division Commander Alpha 3 Patterson. **Do you copy?**” Then wait for a reply to begin or if no reply in 15 seconds, try again. Continue to wait for clear air when you try again. You should each memorize the call sign for your Division Commander (In this case, Alpha 3 Patterson). Give your report in **as brief a manner as possible**, remembering you are sharing this channel with up to 60 other radio users. Once you have completed your report to Division Command, continue to monitor Channel 4 at all times – listening for instructions from **your** Division Commander. This is important as other Divisions will be on the channel and reporting in.

- During an extended emergency, be sure to leave your radio on and occasionally check the battery fuel gauge on your radio display to determine if you need to replace the batteries. When the battery life is down to 25% (usually after 15 hours of steady use), replace with fresh batteries so the radio will transmit at full power.
- If you are in a house or for some reason even outside and you cannot get Division Command to answer your transmission, make a note of it and move to a new location, such as a window facing the Lodge, or a clear area between houses, face Lodge and try again. Radio coverage is not an exact science, designed to work 95% of the time in 95% of the places. Be flexible.
- Go thru this tutorial a few times and if you have questions about anything regarding use of your radio, call or text me (Dan Kopp) at 951-238-0359 or email at dkopp2@roadrunner.com. I will arrange to discuss your issues or meet with you. Hope this helps.

Replace batteries every 6 months or if the radio is used extensively. Always have spare batteries to take with you during a drill or emergency

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leave radio on and monitor Channel 4 until the drill/emergency is over and you hear an announcement that the Net is closed

Turn off your radio ONLY after checking out of the NET

told by Net Control you are checked in and your household and personnel are ok, begin your windshield pass, driving or walking your assigned area and with your size up form in hand, note addresses displaying a "Help needed" or "OK" sign in window. Note any other unusual conditions in your assigned area

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