

Radio Familiarization

(Last updated on 6-20-2023)

Objective: To help participants feel comfortable participating in two-way radio tests and emergencies.

Topics:

Basic Etiquette

Common Language

Phonetic Alphabet & Numerals

Important Baofeng Settings

Basic Etiquette

Ensure the battery is charged and power is on.

Keep the volume high enough to hear calls. You may need to adjust your squelch as well. If your squelch setting is too high, you may not hear others. If it is set too low, you may hear too much static.

Unlike phones, you cannot speak and listen at the same time. Therefore, don't interrupt if you hear others talking. Wait until their conversation is finished. If you have a serious emergency, **DO** interrupt them to issue your emergency message (see "Break! Break! Break" in Language below).

Identify yourself when you first come online, and request to know whether others hear you ok. Example: "This is Jack. Radio check. Over."

Think before you speak and assume your conversations can be heard by others, including unfriendly parties. These are public frequencies and are usable by people not in your group. Unless there is an emergency, avoid political or social commentary.

Speak clearly, a little slower than normal, in a normal tone, and avoid shouting.

Keep your messages simple enough for intended listeners to understand.

Make your messages as concise, precise, and clear as possible.

Avoid long and complicated sentences. If your message is long, divide it into separate shorter messages.

Avoid abbreviations unless they are well understood by others.

Common Language

"Affirmative": Yes.

"Break! Break! Break!" or *"Emergency! Emergency! Emergency!"*: You're interrupting in the middle of communication because you have an emergency. All others should stop talking and listen until the emergency is relayed, and refrain from less important chatter until the emergency has been dealt with. The word "break" should only be used in emergencies.

"Come in": You're asking the other party to acknowledge they hear you.

"Copy": You understand what was said.

"Go ahead": You're ready to receive the transmission.

"Negative": No.

"Over": Your message is finished. This lets others know they can speak.

"Radio check": Can you hear me? What is my signal strength?

"Read you [signal strength] and/but [transmission quality]": Response to "Radio check". Example: "I read you loud, but intermittent. Over." Signal strength can be "loud," "good," "weak," "very weak," or "fading" (their signal strength fades to such an extent that continuous reception cannot be relied upon). Transmission quality can be "clear" (excellent), "readable" (satisfactory), "unreadable" (bad), "distorted" or "with interference" (trouble hearing due to interference), or "intermittent" (off and on).

"Repeat": Used before you repeat something. Example: "I require one-five, repeat one-five, gallons of fuel. Over."

"Roger" or *"Ten four"*: Message received and understood.

"Say again": Re-transmit your message.

"Signing off": You're ending all radio communications.

"Stand-by": You acknowledge the other party, but are unable to respond immediately.

"Wilco": I will comply.

Phonetic Alphabet & Numerals

Sometimes spelling a critical word or number out using phonetics can make the difference in your message being understood correctly. We recommend that everyone learn to speak and translate this simple pronunciation language. The bolded portion indicates the syllable to be emphasized.

Phonetic Alphabet

Letter	Word	Pronunciation
A	Alpha	AL FAH
B	Bravo	BRAH VOH
C	Charlie	CHAR LEE
D	Delta	DELL TAH
E	Echo	ECK OH
F	Foxtrot	FOKS TROT
G	Golf	GOLF
H	Hotel	HOH TELL
I	India	IN DEE AH
J	Juliet	JEW LEE ETT
K	Kilo	KEY LOH
L	Lima	LEE MAH
M	Mike	MIKE
N	November	NO VEM BER
O	Oscar	OSS CAH
P	Papa	PAH PAH
Q	Quebec	KEH BECK
R	Romeo	ROW ME OH
S	Sierra	SEE AIR RAH
T	Tango	TANG GO
U	Uniform	YOU NEE FORM
V	Victor	VIK TAH
W	Whiskey	WISS KEY
X	Xray	ECKS RAY
Y	Yankee	YANG KEY
Z	Zulu	ZOO LOO

Phonetic Numerals

Numeral	Pronunciation
1	WON
2	TOO
3	TREE
4	FOW ER
5	FIFE
6	SIX
7	SEV EN
8	AIT
9	NIN ER
0	ZE RO

Important Baofeng Settings

Below are a few general Baofeng handheld settings to be familiar with:

- To change most settings, select the "Menu" button. Use the up and down arrow keys to go to the Menu number you wish to change. You'll see the number you're on (0 through 40) flashing just under the battery indicator on the upper right. Once at the setting you want to change, select the "Menu" button one more time, and then use the up and down arrow keys to select the setting you prefer. To save that setting, select "Menu" again. Once you're done adjusting settings, select the "Exit" button.
- Normally keep the "SQL" (squellch) set at "1" using Menu 0. This allows you to hear as much as possible without also hearing lots of background static.
- Ensure your "VOX" (voice activation) setting is "OFF" using Menu 4.
- Ensure your "ROGER" beep (the annoying tone sent after each time you transmit) is "OFF" using Menu 39.
- Press and hold the "MON" (Monitor) button (just below the PTT button) to open the squelch all the way to help you hear weak signals. Release the button to return to your normal squelch settings.

If you are in an active and/or unsafe environment, consider the following:

- To lock the keypad, press and hold the "#" key until a small key icon appears beside the battery indicator. *This does NOT affect the Push To Talk ("PTT") button or the volume/on/off control knob.* To unlock the keypad, press and hold the "#" key again until the small key icon disappears. Locking the keypad prevents you from accidentally changing a channel or other setting, which can be especially useful if you are on the move and/or for newer users.
- Tap "#" to *temporarily* adjust your transmitting power level. For the 5-watt version, you'll typically see an "L" on the upper left of your screen when you are on low transmitting power, and the "L" will disappear if you are on high power. Transmitting on low power reduces your chance of being heard by malevolent parties — so long as the parties you're trying to communicate with can still hear you. Note that when you turn your radio off and on again, it will default to your "TXP" (transmitting power) level in Menu 2.
- Turn the "BEEP" noise that sounds every time you press a keypad button "OFF" using Menu 8.
- Turn off the Voice using Menu 14.
- Know how to factory reset ALL your radio settings using Menu 40. This can prevent a hostile party from learning more about you.