

Common Poor Practices

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I will not claim to be a fantastic operator, and I could never claim to know all there is about operating. What I do know, however, is what I hear on the air. Most of the time, poor practices are the result of misinformation or no information, but the solution is usually simple: experience.

There is no substitute for experience, but I've outlined a few examples of poor or inefficient operating.

- “This is KX1XXX listening 146.95”
The statement most often heard on VHF repeaters. Why bother to say the frequency? We know what frequency you're on, because we're listening!
- “Your call?”
Sometimes the running station needs to give his call more often. However, replying to a CQ with “your call” is a waste of time. He'll CQ again in a moment anyway. If you can't understand the call in the CQ, work him first and get it during.
- Using “cute” phonetics
All of us do it (see “K1 Killer Antenna Array”), but we shouldn't do it on the air. Stick to the standard or accepted phonetics unless you are in a more laid-back environment.
- “QRZ the frequency?”
I don't even understand this one. This is wrong both in syntax and meaning. Simply ask “is the frequency in use?”
- “Please copy...” “Please QSL...” “Hear...”
In a contest, don't bother saying any of these. They just take up time. Of course we are going to copy, that's the point of the contest, and you don't have to remind us.
- “Sorry, we're a dupe.”
The days of the old dupe sheet are long gone. Computer programs automatically throw away the dupes without claiming them for additional points. Work them anyway; there is no penalty. In fact, the chance of incurring a penalty from NOT working a dupe is 100% higher than the chance of incurring a penalty from working one. If you disagree, don't work the dupe, but it may mean YOU made a mistake earlier in the contest.
- Picking a TX frequency without listening
While working split, remember to check your transmit frequency from time to time, and especially before establishing a run. When calling a station split, make sure the frequency you are about to call on is clear; it may be clear in EU, but what about your neck of the woods?