

Wilderness Steward Volunteers Radio Operating Procedures

General Care and Etiquette--

- 1) Radios are kept clean and dry. Put in a plastic bag if raining. Don't drop. They cost big bucks.
- 2) Keep conversations short, professional, and to the point. However, do not be intimidated to use the radio.
- 3) Make sure you know which frequencies and locations work for calling in before you go.
- 4) Turn radio on with right knob. Adjust squelch with left knob by turning clockwise until you hear the squelch, adjust volume, then back off squelch until you no longer hear it. Keep lower levers on low, which scan turned off unless you need it.
- 5) Leave radio on during daylight hours. Turn off at dusk to save battery.
- 6) Radio is normally kept on Channel 1 unless you are in a dead zone. Then you would use Channel 5 for the Alpine Repeater (Lake Wenatchee area) or Channel 6 for the Icicle Ridge Repeater (works in the Upper Icicle, Upper Ingalls Creek, the Chiwaukum country). You can tell if you are hitting the repeater by keying the mike and listening for the "Kachook" sound. If there is no "Kachook", then there is no use calling out because you aren't hitting the repeater. Channel 3 can be used for a longer conversation with someone nearby (like if you were out with me, but we split up for the day.)
- 7) The battery is still good when the red light stays on when the mike is depressed. If battery is low, change by removing battery pack from base of radio. To remove, depress silver lever at top of battery pack, twist, and remove. Reinstall fresh battery by lining up curved edge of battery pack with curved side of radio (it will be slightly ajar), then twist to lock in position. Check to see that red light stays on when mike is keyed.
- 8) Keep the radio oriented vertically, with the back of the radio facing the direction the radio waves need to travel. If you are unsuccessful from one location, move to higher ground or try from another location. Often times you don't have to move far at all.
- 9) Take one extra battery pack so that you will have all the juice you need in the event of an emergency.
- 10) Be mindful that all your conversations are public including the neighbors listening in on their scanners.

Signing Out to the Field--

- 1) Depress mike (bumpy button on left side), wait one or two seconds, and call Wenatchee by saying "Wenatchee, 7 (Your last name), for example "7Therrell". Leave the mike depressed more 2 more seconds then let go.
- 2) They reply, "Wenatchee".
- 3) You then give your travel itinerary, including the day you plan to return. Keep it simple. For example, "I am at the White River Trailhead enroute to the Napeequa. I will return Monday." Wenatchee will say, "copy, have a nice day" and then they sign off. You sign off by saying "(your last name) clear." For example, 7Therrell clear. Do not be surprised if they seem a little confused on who you are. If they seem confused, they will settle down if you tell them you are a volunteer.

During your trip-- Check in 1x per day, letting Wenatchee know your location, and your travel plan for that day. For example, "I'm checking in from Lake Josephine. I plan to be at Chain Lakes by tonight." I usually try calling in around 9:00 in the morning, so that if I am unsuccessful, I can try later in the day. The radio works best from higher elevations or areas where ridges are not obstructing the repeaters, so it is important to try from a different location.

Signing into the Ranger Station--

1) Call Wenatchee and tell them that you have "returned to the ranger station".

Emergencies!!

1) CALL WENATCHEE!! Do not be afraid to tell them that you are a volunteer wilderness ranger, and you need a little coaching on what to do. Make sure you conserve your battery to get you through whatever lies in front of you. A search and rescue often takes 5-6 hours IF they can fly that day. Wenatchee stays in service til early evening and is sometimes on all night during high fire danger.

2) If you are not able to reach Wenatchee, even with the repeaters, try calling out with the lever changed to "high" instead of "low". We normally leave it on low because high uses a lot more juice from the battery.

Calling Another Person or the Leavenworth Ranger Station--

1) The protocol is the same as calling Wenatchee. You say the name of the other person first, then your name. For example, "7Randels (this is) 7Therrell". Or to call the ranger station, "Leavenworth, 7 Therrell". When all done, sign out, "Therrell clear".

Recharging (For your information)

1) Nicad rechargeable batteries are recharged after each trip; this is the battery with the little silver bumps on the bottom. Once a month, these batteries are fully drained down and recharged, with the percent charge and date recorded on the battery. When the battery only holds a 60% charge, we take it out of service.

2) You may also have a "clamshell" battery pack. This type uses AA batteries. It is recognized by no bumps on the bottom. Instead you will notice the seam where the inner core is surrounded by the outer casing. To change batteries, push the inner core down and out. Remove old batteries and insert fresh ones paying attention to inserting the charged ends correctly.