

# Bainbridge Amateur Hour Net

## Tips for Net Controllers

August 22, 2020

When in doubt, let kindness be your guiding principal.

Don't criticize, condemn or complain.

Smile. People can hear it when you talk on the radio.

Learn to connect names to call signs. Call people by their names.

You will make mistakes. Set an example for the new hams. Roll with it. Shake it off. You can laugh at your own mistakes, but not at other people's mistakes. When you make a mistake, acknowledge it and address it. People will respect this more than being perfect.

The net is here for participants to talk. The control operator is only there to facilitate, not to pontificate

Get to know the participants. Take notes when they talk, so you can remember what they have going on the next time you talk to them

The repeater covers a relatively small area. You likely have a ton of shared experiences with the participants – favorite places, favorite hikes or drives, that blizzard five years ago. Use that for conversation.

Possible themes – What did you have for dinner? What's your favorite walk, hike, or drive nearby? What's your favorite place to see the view? Non-commercial, non-political, non-religious.

You are the leader of this net. Earn the trust of net participants. Be friendly and courteous. Show a genuine interest in what people are sharing, and ask follow-up questions. Learn people's names and use them often. Politely insist on positive behavior from all net participants.

This is not a teaching net! Do not correct people. Do not point out errors. If you can understand someone, that is the definition of success!

Although this is not a teaching net, respectfully insist that people sign off with their call sign if they have not done so. "Dave – please come back for a second to give your call sign and sign off." It is a requirement. You are not teaching. You are making a request.

While conducting the net, the repeater will identify itself every ten minutes. Use that as a reminder to say your call sign to comply with FCC regulations.

People will occasionally over-share personal tragedies. Take a moment to acknowledge the sadness. Then move on to the next station

Please avoid/steer conversations away from commercial interests (stores, restaurants, businesses), politics or religion. Derogatory, inflammatory, or discriminatory statements may result in participants

being banned from the repeater or may result in the Net Control Operator from being removed from that position.

You will not agree with everything you hear. If you don't agree with someone, it is important to still start by empathizing with them. You don't need to pretend to agree. As long as they're not violating net policies (discrimination, etc), let them have their say, acknowledge what they've said, and move on. If participant is irate, see separate sheet entitled "NET CONTROL MANUAL - IRATE PARTICIPANT"

If you have trouble understanding someone's call sign or name, ask them to spell it phonetically, using the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) alphabet. It's good practice for both of you

Know your call sign. Know it like your own name. Know how to say it in the ITU phonetic alphabet.

Learn the phonetic alphabet. Know it as well as you know the regular alphabet. Practice spelling random words in it. Make it automatic.

Learn your friends' call signs. Know them like you know their names. You don't always recognize voices over the air. It's good practice to connect call signs to faces.

Learn to stay focused and in the moment. Do not have any distractions, such as a cell phone or computer. Paper based record-keeping is recommended for this reason. Do not let your attention stray from the net!

Before you go on the air, make sure you are rested and fed, and have used the bathroom. Be ready to stay on air for the length of the net.

Make sure you are transmitting from a safe, warm, controlled environment.

### **Before you host your first net:**

Listen to a few nets. The Puget Sound Repeater Group (PSRG) repeater streams live here: <https://web.psrg.org/listen/>

They have nets every day at 9am and 9pm, and a "boater's net" every day at 7:47am.

Participate in a few nets. Ours, of course, or the PSRG nets, or any net that is convenient for you.

Practice writing down all the call signs, names, and locations that you hear on those nets.

For your first few nets, until you have some practice as net control, consider having a friend act as a scribe. They write down call signs, names, and notes so you can focus on the radio.

Do you need a better set-up at your shack? Do you need a headset to hear better? An external speaker/mic for convenience?

Are you using an HT as your primary radio? Being a net control operator will involve much more talking than you may be used to. This drains your radio batteries much faster than listening. Will your batteries last? Can you operate your radio while it's on the charger? Can you transmit at a lower power and still be heard just as well?