

A request for Ham-spirit on the air

10 recommendations addressed to European radio amateurs

Since the years seventies - more than one generation ago -, I have observed quite a lot of changes in the ham activity, of course on the technical side with the widespread of computers and Internet access but also in the regulatory body and in the behaviour of some amateurs. Through this web I would like to publish an official request to all European hams, from both western and eastern Europe, from northern to Mediterranean countries in order that they be more fair play in regards to the ham community.

- 1).** Always check if the frequency is not in use by another ham before calling CQ, asking three times if the frequency is free. During a QSO the frequency might look like free because you don't heard one of the two amateurs in QSO but them can maybe hear you. Wait at least one minute for trying to hear to local station before to take a frequency. If the frequency is in use, please QSY and leave the frequency polite. No frequency belongs to individual or a radio club, whatever the reason or the time of the day.
- 2).** A QSO, whatever its objective is a two-way contact. Therefore it is recommended that when a QSO is working all other stations be silent and wait the end of the contact to call.
- 3).** Do not call an amateur while another QSO is working. It is only acceptable to introduce you at the end of a conversation if the amateur has not left a blank of a few seconds before taking the microphone, time sufficient to hear someone wishing to work with the group. Otherwise try to ask for a break with diplomacy and tact.
- 4).** QRM on frequencies is not tolerated and does not respect the rules that you read and accepted when you received your license. Your full privilege license does not mean that you have full privilege to be tactless, to disturb others and be unrespectfully against the ham spirit.
- 5).** The fact to own a call sign, a large directive aerial or a powerful amplifier does not mean that you have more rights than other hams. On the contrary using gears more powerful than the ones used by the majority of users, you are invited to not interfere with the ham community.
- 6).** Know your band plan, the working frequencies assigned to your license class, and if you are not concerned, avoid using frequencies dedicated to QRP, SSTV, CW or digital operations. You disturb amateurs concerned by these modes of traffic and you do not respect your regulation.
- 7).** Calling on a large bandwidth in CW or SSB (over 1 kHz in CW and 3 kHz in SSB), tuning on the air or switching to a non linear amplifier and parasiting a good part of the band is not tolerable. You are asked to use an efficient equipment, well tuned, in order to prevent such perturbations.
- 8).** When calling CQ DX, do work all incoming stations when the propagation is wide open without to restrict your QSO to a specific country or bearing. There is no "advantage" of working a particular area of the world and avoiding the other ones; this attitude has often disadvantages for amateurs calling from the other parts of the world and to whom the DX does not answer. Conversely do not disturb a DXman calling a specific DX. Listen to his request (calling for example Asia, calling Pacific, calling VK-ZL, outside Europe, etc) and respect his wish to not answer if you live on the same continent as him.
- 9).** In usual circumstances a callsign has never been limited to the two last digits. This way to request a QSO is useless and does not respect the regulation. Excepting in pileups in which some rules have to be defined to fasten calling procedures, this method slows down traffic as one will ask you to repeat your call sign, and is a waste of time.
- 10).** Do not interrupt or insist to work a DX station if he doesn't want to answer you call. Everybody, including "most wanted DX" have the right to use the air and to get some privacy without be the prey to pileup or chasing by tactless hams. If you observe that this DXman does QSY several times, tell you that this is not necessary to work on another band, but simply to escape the pileup that he is creating. Be friendly and balanced.

Dealing with pileups, if you are a DX-pedition operator or a net control you must institute some strict rules before accepting QSOs. As a manager you act as the frequency policer and hams have to respect your rules, never the contrary. From your behaviour depends on the fair play of all hams calling you.

In the field, these rules being far to be applied, the conclusion is hard but true : statistically speaking, due to all these voluntary perturbations coming from european hams who do not respect the ham spirit, the rate of QSOs established by Europeans DXing is far below the rate performed by hams from any other continent. See by yourself : 25% of Europeans established successfully QSOs with DX-peditions while 75% of K/W stations succeed and up to 90% of JA stations.

The solution ? Since the early days of hamradio, you should know that we respect the ham spirit, which means co-operation, assistance, loyalty, good-will, patience, consideration and friendship when working on the air. So I have only one word to tell you : be fair play please !