BETTER QUALITY SIGNALS WHILE USING YOUR HANDY TALKIE (HT) AT HOME, PORTABLE OR WHILE IN YOUR MOBILE

You may find yourself using your HT, HandyTalkie, for different purposes, such as a base, portable or mobile radio operations.

Here are a few tips that will allow you to get better quality signals and more solid contacts with the somewhat limited signals normally available

with the lower power and smaller (rubber duck) antennas used with these portable radios.

By using a better power supply as well as a better antenna, you may be surprised with the improvement in your communications ability. This is especially important during emergency conditions that may occur such as severe weather or other natural disasters that may cause power outages and the need to supply portable or mobile emergency communication stations to local agencies.

You may use a automobile or marine battery to supply power. If you have a small battery charger you may recharge it when and if you have power.

Of course, if you have commercial power, you can use a smaller power supply, while that power is available.

In your mobile, get an adapter and use the lighter plug to supply power to the radio.

Most of the HT’s have an extension speaker/mike available for them. These will let you operate with more freedom. If you will clip the HT on one of the cheap metal bookends, this will help keep them stable. The belt clip is usually connected to the power module and is in effect the heat sink for the radio. By attaching the HT to the (metal) bookend, this will also enhance the ability of the radio to dissipate more heat and keep it from overheating while running high power. Also the bookend may be bent back at an angle where you can see the display more readily. So if you or someone only has an HT, you can make it more versatile, by following some of these tips.

There are many different mobile antennas available that will prove excellent during these conditions. The magnet mount versions are easily adapted to the portable or mobile environment that you will probably see during times that you need to provide communications on short notice and no telling where.

I do suggest that, for a mobile antenna. Don’t spend your money on one of the quarter wave versions if you can get one of the 5/8 wave versions for a little more. I use both so again it’s your choice for your money. The ¼ wave versions are good for a portable antenna or one to use at home or at a remote, temporary set up. I use one in the house during bad weather. I am however, close enough to most area repeaters, to be able to put a good signal into them without the need for more gain. Consider your location and repeater availability in order to supply your communication needs.

You may place them (Mag Mount Antennas) on a metal tool box, refrigerator, washing machine or filing cabinet and they

should work well for you. If you are using an HT the 5/8 will be better, but if you have the higher power available with a mobile the ¼ wave will probably work for you. The lower power of an HT combined with a lower gain antenna and low capacity power supply could make it somewhat marginal. So, do consider all these factors.

Also, handy talkies, will usually operate down to around 5 or 6 volts, while my mobiles have stopped transmitting at around 11 volts. SO, if you might be operating from a battery supply, this may be another factor to consider.

You may use any brand HT that you prefer but, I personally don’t like the very small (credit card) pocket radios due to the fact that they are hard to see and some are more difficult to program. Some of them are limited as to power (maybe only 200 to 350 mw) and you need as much from an HT as you can get to work the repeaters with the best quality signal you can transmit. This also depends on the better power supplies and antennas that I mentioned above.

Remember also that, before purchasing your first radio, consider that many of the mobiles (most with at lease 50 watts available) may be purchased for less than most of the HT’s. Most mobiles have a low power setting of around 5 watts, same as high on most HT’s, so you may usually run them at the lower setting if possible, thus saving on power consumption if you are using a limited supply such as a marine or auto battery. So check around with others and see what they recommend and decide what to buy. Do consider the JUMP START power packs available at most discount stores for supplying your power. I and several friends have used these with our ht’s for over a month without having to recharge them.

I hope some of these ideas may help you get more from those HT’S. Don’t forget to use these same setups to check into your local nets or for local rag chewing so you will know, for sure if you can, indeed, provide dependable communications when you are needed.

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