Welcome to the Amateur Radio

This page lists basic information to help new hams get started with the hobby. For information specific to our club, see this page.

What to Buy

Traditionally, the major radio brands have been Icom, Yeasu, and Kenwood. Recently, many Chinese radios have appeared on the market that can be much cheaper (both in cost and quality). As a result, many new hams get a Baofeng handheld as their first radio. Unfortunately, the issue with (only) using a handheld is that even though they might hear the local repeaters just fine, they often have difficulties talking to them because of their lower power.

In general, the antenna is the most important part of the system and the radio is the least important. So for those on a budget, the **minimum** setup should consist of an external antenna (mounted on the side of the house or on a balcony for example), with a cheap Chinese mobile radio like the QYT KT-8900. That being said, if you can afford a good radio from one of the big three, they are well worth it.

A very good basic antenna is the Comet GP-3. If the coax line is not too long, RG-8x works, but if you're able to mount the antenna higher (and height makes a huge difference!), then it's worth buying good coax like LMR-400.

Finally, ham radios usually run on 12V (13.8V to be more precise), so you'll also need a power supply, which are rated in Amperage. With only one (basic VHF/UHF) radio, you'll need at least 5A. The club has a bunch of these low output power supply so ask us to borrow one. Eventually, though, you'll want a power supply that can provide at least 20A so that you can power more equipment.

Where to Buy

Now that you're ready to buy some equipment, check out these pages:

- Retailers
- Our club's Buy and Sell page.

And ask around for opinions. Also, if you google a radio and add "eham" to the search term, you'll get some very good reviews.

Frequencies

Here are some good places to find out which frequencies to use:

- Simplex
- Repeaters
- Programming your radio with Chirp