

The Amateur Radio Golden Rule

While there isn't one single universally defined "golden rule" for ham radio, several core principles are repeatedly emphasized: listen before transmitting, use the minimum necessary power, and operate courteously and responsibly. These principles promote responsible operation, respect for others on the airwaves, and the effective use of shared frequencies, helping to create a positive and welcoming environment for all amateur radio operators.

Key Principles of Ham Radio Operation

Listen First

Before transmitting, always listen to ensure the frequency is not in use. A weak station might be transmitting, or a conversation could be in progress, and a clear frequency can become blocked by a premature call.

Use Minimum Power

Employ the least amount of power necessary to make a successful contact. This conserves power, reduces interference, and improves your operating skills.

Be Courteous and Respectful

Treat other operators with courtesy and consideration. Be patient with new operators, and avoid controversial topics that could cause offense or conflict.

Keep it Brief and Clear

Make your transmissions clear, concise, and to the point. Use simple language that is easy to understand.

Don't Monopolize a Frequency

Allow others a chance to use the frequency. Avoid hogging a channel, especially during peak times or busy nets.

Operate Responsibly

Understand that all transmissions are public and that frequencies are shared. Operate in a way that upholds the reputation of amateur radio.

Adhere to Band Plans

Strictly follow established band plans and frequency allocations for your operating band.

Handle Conflicts Privately

If disagreements arise, resolve them off the air or through appropriate channels, rather than airing them on the airwaves.