

WMHCTA RADIO OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Radio Protocol for "Old" Radios

This radio protocol assumes that you are using "old" radios supplied by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, and that the radios will be used as part of the WWNF repeater system.

Check in with La Grande Dispatch twice a day, once in the morning, once in the evening. Of course, it is OK to use the radio at other times as well, in the event of emergencies, to coordinate a rendezvous, request supplies, etc.

Normal hours are 7 am (0700 hrs) to 6 pm (1800 hrs) once fire season has started. Early in the field season, their hours may be shorter (e.g. 0730 to 1700). During active fires, their hours will be longer. Phone numbers for La Grande Dispatch are: 541-963-7171 (main), 541-975-5409 (North End).

Before leaving on a one-day or multi-day project, call Dispatch on the phone and give them your general itinerary, including who is going, where you will be working, and when you expect to return. They may ask questions about what vehicles you are using, where they will be left, etc.

The radios rely on more or less line-of-sight with repeater towers (which are located in nearly 20 places outside the wilderness) to communicate with Dispatch. Refer to the repeater location map to select the best repeater, and walk to a high, open spot to get best contact. If you are unable to make contact by radio, try a different repeater, or use the SPOT to check in or out, or try again later in the day when your position may be more advantageous. Wind can be problematic, so try to avoid windy spots.

In the field, turn on your radio and just listen for a minute or two to make sure someone else isn't already talking with Dispatch. When there is space on the airwaves, start your contact. Be sure to press the transmit button before you start talking, and leave it pressed down for a second after you finish, so that your transmission isn't cut off.

Assume your name is Big Slacker:

You: "La Grande Dispatch, this is Slacker on Point Prominence." (or whatever repeater you're using)

LG Dispatch: "Slacker, this is LG Dispatch," or "Go ahead, Slacker."

Have your conversation. Ordinarily, give your location, your itinerary, and where you plan to end up at the end of the day. At the end of the conversation ...

You: "Slacker clear."

LG Dispatch: "1730." (time you cleared)

Leave the radio on for up to half an hour if you can spare the battery juice, in case Dispatch, or John Hollenbeak, or Sweyn Wall needs to communicate with you.

Dispatch logs and records all calls in case of an emergency.

Radio Operation

Turning on the radio without the antenna attached can ruin the electronics in the radio. When not using the radio, it's a good idea to separate the battery pack from the radio body to avoid accidentally turning on the radio and running down batteries or ruining the unit.

To operate, make sure all three switches A,B, and C are in the down or forward position. Turn the Repeater Selection knob to the repeater you wish to use. Extend the antenna. Turn on the radio, moving the Volume knob to about 12 noon. Turn the Squelch knob up until it squeals, then back off just enough to stop the static. Depress and release the Talk button on the side of the unit. If you get no static upon release, you probably won't get through, but it's worth a try.

You will be able to hear them better than they can hear you because they have more powerful transmitters. Vehicle radios also have more powerful transmitters than handheld units.

Ordinarily, use Group 1. To change the group, press #, enter the group number, press ENT

For air to ground communication: Group 4, primary channel=4:Charlie, secondary=5:Oscar

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Repeater Locations

