

-For Public Safety- F.C.C. Licensed Amateur Radio Operators

Who are Amateur Radio Operators??

There is a common public misconception with the use of the term “amateur” when referring to this group of radio operators as it may seem to imply that these licensed radio operators are just novices tinkering with radios. The term “amateur” in fact is used instead to distinguish their actions from commercial, business/profit-oriented models such as radio and television broadcast for-profit conglomerates. Amateur radio operators are licensed and regulated by the F.C.C and must and pass extensive written exams which include the proper use of radio equipment. The F.C.C. license is conditional in that licensed operators must meet high standards of operation or the license can be revoked. Additionally, the license must be renewed periodically.

Licensed amateur radio operators are generally drawn by their interest and a desire to be helpful/provide assistance when asked. They are most often shown to be responsible and understand/respect the importance of radio communication when it comes to public safety.

The world depends on maintaining good communication. Historically, when disasters occur and nothing else can provide emergency communications, amateur radio can.

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, amateur radio helped get word out and organize disaster relief efforts. In fact, it is well documented that amateur radio has been helping disaster relief efforts for over 100 years.

Our modern military and FEMA greatly depend on Amateur radio. So does the National Weather Service. Amateur radio has been shown to be critically important part of our early warning systems. Cell phones don't function everywhere. If the power grid goes out and nothing else works, amateur radio will.

We have special amateur radio communication satellites in orbit, we're active on the International Space Station and even without a power grid (i.e., Haiti earthquake several years ago), we can bounce signals over the world, thousands of miles to get help. Licensed amateur radio operators offer communications support for organized public events such as Fairs and sporting events. As they support public safety, their largely volunteer efforts also reduce public expenditures.

Negligible Added Risk of Adverse Consequences If Granted Exemption

Licensed amateur radio operators are safety conscious and have a long record of using their radio equipment responsibly. There are no known reports showing licensed amateur radio equipment contributing to motor vehicle accidents in Kansas.

(From interview Bob Eckhardt, N0EMI with Major Scott Harrington, KHP and Tim McCool, Traffic Safety Specialist, Kansas Resource office and KHP-retired).

Comparing the latest published population statistics by U.S. Census Bureau and The American Radio Relay League, the number of licensed amateur radio operators in Kansas only amount to 1/4 of 1% of the entire Kansas population. Given the lack of reported problems associated with the use of amateur radio in vehicles and the limited number of licensed amateur radio operators in Kansas allowing these responsible licensed amateur radio operators to use their radios in their vehicles pose a negligible added risk.

This small group include many dedicated individuals committed to public safety. Through their efforts, licensed amateur radio operators provide a valued public service.

Many States and Municipalities have drafted or are considering distracted driver prohibitions, but make allowances for licensed amateur radio operators. As examples, Manhattan, Kansas- City Municipal Code, Section 14, The State of Texas passed legislation allowing licensed amateur radio operators to use their radios in motor vehicles, recognizing their value to public safety.

About Re: SB 144

Warnings for preparedness and urgent matters/critical public safety communications are **not** the same as reporting an emergency. The proposed bill, SB 144 in its current form, prohibit licensed amateur radio operators from using their hand-held radio equipment unless reporting an emergency- which may be too little, too late. Early warnings allow us to prepare and be proactive rather than try to explain later why we weren't prepared. As example, if licensed amateur radio operators are prohibited from communications, it may be necessary to explain to people why their homes blew away and there was no/insufficient warning.

As a matter of public safety, as a proven, long-time valued/recognized contributor to public service, please include licensed amateur radio communications as exempt from violation in this proposed legislation.

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