

# READYING RADIOS FOR WINTER

BY DICK WOOLF, NSP TELECOM ADVISOR

Patrollers have a lot to consider as the weather turns brisk, and one item on the checklist may (or should) be preparing radios for the upcoming season. Here are some pointers for making this vital equipment good to go.

- Inspect the charging contacts of batteries, the mating contacts in the radio, and the contacts in the charger. Rub the contacts with a pencil eraser to remove any invisible oxidation that may affect performance. Batteries with evidence of leakage or cracking should be replaced. Observe recycling rules—NiCad batteries are toxic.
- Charge the batteries for 24 hours, with the radio off.
- Remember that batteries only last for a certain number of charge-discharge cycles. If a radio was “dying” after only a few hours last season, it’s not going to get any better this season. Replace depleted batteries.
- Inspect radio antennas. Even though the antennas are flexible, the internal wire is subject to breakage if the

antenna is severely angulated. Such damage may not crack the outside surface of the antenna. Replace suspect antennas.

- Inspect accessories, such as chest packs and speaker mikes to ensure that all parts are intact and ready for use.
- Base stations (and other fixed equipment): check power supply for loose wires. Verify outside antenna, coax cable and connectors for good condition. Inspect/replace weatherproofing on all connectors. Make sure antenna mast (if used) is connected to an earth ground. If you have a lightning arrestor, ensure that it too is properly grounded. Inspect dispatcher mike and cable.
- Finally, after both the portable radios and associated fixed equipment have been inspected and visible problems corrected, test the equipment over typical terrain to verify performance. Before the start of ski season is the time to have needed repairs made. +



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*“Three days in the hospital not to mention my flight for life were undeniable proof that these things do happen, even to people that have been skiing since they were kids. The only aspect more unbelievable that I had actually had a ski accident was the colossal cost of my medical bills. Thanks Adventure Advocates for being there and helping me get back on my feet. I can’t imagine what this would have been like without you.” – Anna J., Colorado*

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