

Ham Radio and Scouting

Ham Radio has much in common with Scouting.

Boy Scouts

- The Radio Amateur's Code is similar to the Boy Scout Oath.
- **Camping:** many hams like to camp out in the outdoors and operate their small backpack radios from remote areas, such as mountain tops and islands.
- One of the options of the Radio Merit Badge is Amateur Radio.
- **Weather:** many hams are National Weather Service Skywarn storm spotters. Hams maintain an amateur radio station at the NWS office at the airport.

Cub Scouts

Although there is not a "Radio" belt loop for Cub Scouts, Amateur Radio does relate to many of the other belt loop academic awards.

- **Citizenship:** hams perform a lot of public service work. We maintain radio stations at hospitals, and many emergency operation centers. We assist the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, The Baptist Men's Kitchen, FEMA, the Texas State Guard, the National Weather Service, and many other organizations in providing for their communications needs. In time of a disaster hams provide essential communications when regular means of communication are damaged. We provide communications for bike races and marathons including the MS 150, and the Beach to Bay Marathon Relay Race in Corpus Christi.
- **Science:** When hams want to repair their equipment, or build their radios from scratch they need to be familiar with various scientific and engineering principles especially about electronics theory. This information is available in reference books written just for hams.
- **Astronomy:** Some of the most interesting and important telescopes do not produce images of visible light, but instead record the radio waves coming from far away stars. These machines are called radio telescopes. They are really very sensitive receivers that can listen to the sounds that radio waves from the far reaches of space make.
- **Collecting:** Hams are great collectors, They will collect just about anything such as Morse code keys, vacuum tubes, antique radios, etc.
- **Communicating:** Hams are one of the best groups of communicators. On the radio you need to be able to express yourself clearly and concisely. You can also communicate with someone who only knows an unfamiliar foreign language if you know the common terms used in Amateur Radio. Hams can communicate via voice, Morse Code, or send messages digitally in the form of emails without the use of an Internet connection.
- **Computers:** Most hams are computer savvy. By connecting a computer to a radio they can send emails to each other using radio waves.
- **Geography:** Most hams who communicate with hams in foreign countries become very interested in geography. This is a natural desire after speaking to someone far away.

- Map and Compass: Hams have always been interested in maps since they often need to point their directional antennas towards a certain country. In fact many hams utilize a map that very few people are familiar with: an azimuthal equidistant map.
- Mathematics: knowing a bit of mathematics is very useful to a ham radio operator. Antennas are cut to specific lengths based on special mathematical formulas. Electronic circuit design requires a lot of math.
- Photography & Reading and Writing: Hams like to publish articles in radio magazines and on websites about their field trips and radios that they have built. Photography and writing skills are a very important part of this. Reading and comprehension are essential if you want to pass your radio amateur examination to become a ham, and afterwards when you want to build a piece of equipment or make a simple antenna.
- Science: The basics of radio are part of the laws of Science. A radio will not work if the builder has not studied the radio theory presented in science text books.
- Weather: The National Weather Service uses hams to track weather. Weather radar can not easily track low altitude weather such as tornadoes, hail, and flooding. Hams trained as Skywarn observers do much of this work.
- Wildlife Conservation: Many animals that are being studied wear radio tracking collars. Sometimes scientists lose track of an animal. Hams often help the scientists track down the location of the missing animal. Hams are good at tracking hidden transmitters and finding an animal with a tracking transmitter on its collar is no different.