

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: What's in the bag? Travel Radio Can Be Fun!



Whether its ARRL Field Day, The PA State QSO Party, activating a Park for Parks on the Air, or just operating from someplace new, it's fun to get outside.

Long time readers of this space will see there are many articles on radios, antennas, and other tips and tricks for operating away from your home station. See <https://www.radioclub-carc.com/resources/> for more articles.

Today we are going to take a look at some of the other items you should have “in the bag” to maximize your travel radio fun.



1. First Aid kit. OK. Not the most exciting item, and hopefully never needed. Your needs may vary, and there are oodles of prepacked, commercial kits available from your pharmacy, on-line retailer, big box store or specialty suppliers such as Grainger.

I carry two First Aid kits. A really small one containing mostly adhesive bandages that lives in one of my backpacks, and a larger kit that lives in the car. While the emphasis is on patching a wound, they also include splinter removers, eye drops, Tylenol, and other basic items. Not prepared for field surgery or even a snake bite, but simple cuts and bug bites are a more realistic concern.



2. Snacks and beverages. How much and what is up to you, but a cooler of iced tea and some brownies makes for a better day!
3. A hat and jacket - just in case it rains. Are you planning to operate Summits On The Air? A wool hat, gloves, and a winter jacket – just in case it snows at high altitude.
4. Table, chair and canopy. Portable operation is more fun when you are comfortable!
5. Sunscreen.
6. Bug spray, because you don't want to become a meal for mosquitos. I was going to suggest carrying some bear bells for much the same reason. However, the U.S National Park Service cautions that bears probably won't hear you jingling until you are too close for safety. Instead, they suggest you should talk as a way of making your presence known to any bears that might be in the area.

7. Extra batteries. Not just for the radio, but also for its accessories.

8. A flashlight. See #7 for an important reminder.



9. A polarity tester. Operating off a battery? Before you turn on the radio be sure the polarity is

correct! Powerwerx makes one called Test Buddy. If using commercial power something such as this works well!



10. The User Manual for your radio as well as any accessories. These can be printed or saved as PDF's on a computer, tablet or phone.

11. Many events or modes require knowing where you are located: State; County; Maidenhead Grid Square; CQ Zone or ITU Zone are some of the more common locators. Either research this ahead of time, or use one of the many Maidenhead grid location apps available.

Catch 'ya on the air!

Picture 1 Andrew Forsyth AF3I and Dave Hile W3VRE operating at the K3IEC PA QSA Party station in 2019. Frank Mellott KB3PQT photo.