DMR OPERATING BASICS & BEST PRACTICES

KØNGA MIKE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HAM RADIO

MIKE’S DMR DOCTRINE

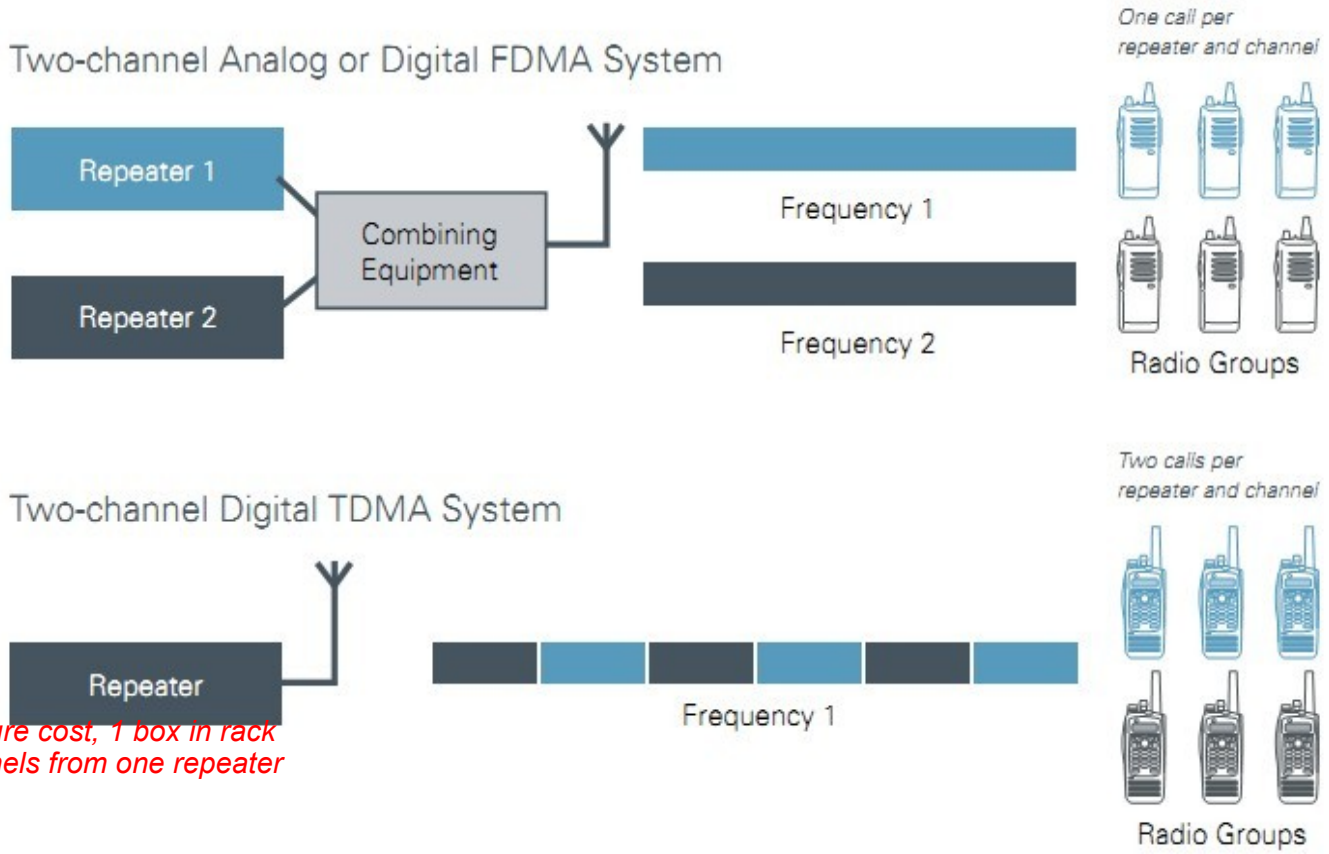
If something about using DMR for Amateur Radio doesn’t make sense, remember that DMR was created for commercial use, and was never designed nor intended for Amateur Radio use.

WHAT IS DMR/TRBO?

- DMR (Digital Mobile Radio) is an international commercial digital radio standard that originated in Europe
- TRBO refers to MotoTRBO which is Motorola's implementation of the DMR standard
- Many Amateur Radio repeater networks use MotoTRBO equipment, which is why they are commonly referred to as "TRBO" networks
- You do not need to use a Motorola MotoTRBO radio to use these networks

TWO REPEATERS IN ONE!

TDMA saves licensing and equipment costs by enabling the equivalent of two 6.25 kHz channels within a single licensed 12.5 kHz channel



Lower infrastructure cost, 1 box in rack
TWO voice channels from one repeater

NEW CONCEPTS

- Frequency Pair – not new
- Color Code – Functions similar to a CTCSS or DCS access tone
- Repeater Slot – Each DMR Repeater has two, you must specify which one to use
- Talk Group – Each repeater slot can be logically segmented further into talk groups
- Receive Group – List of talk groups to monitor on the channel’s assigned repeater slot

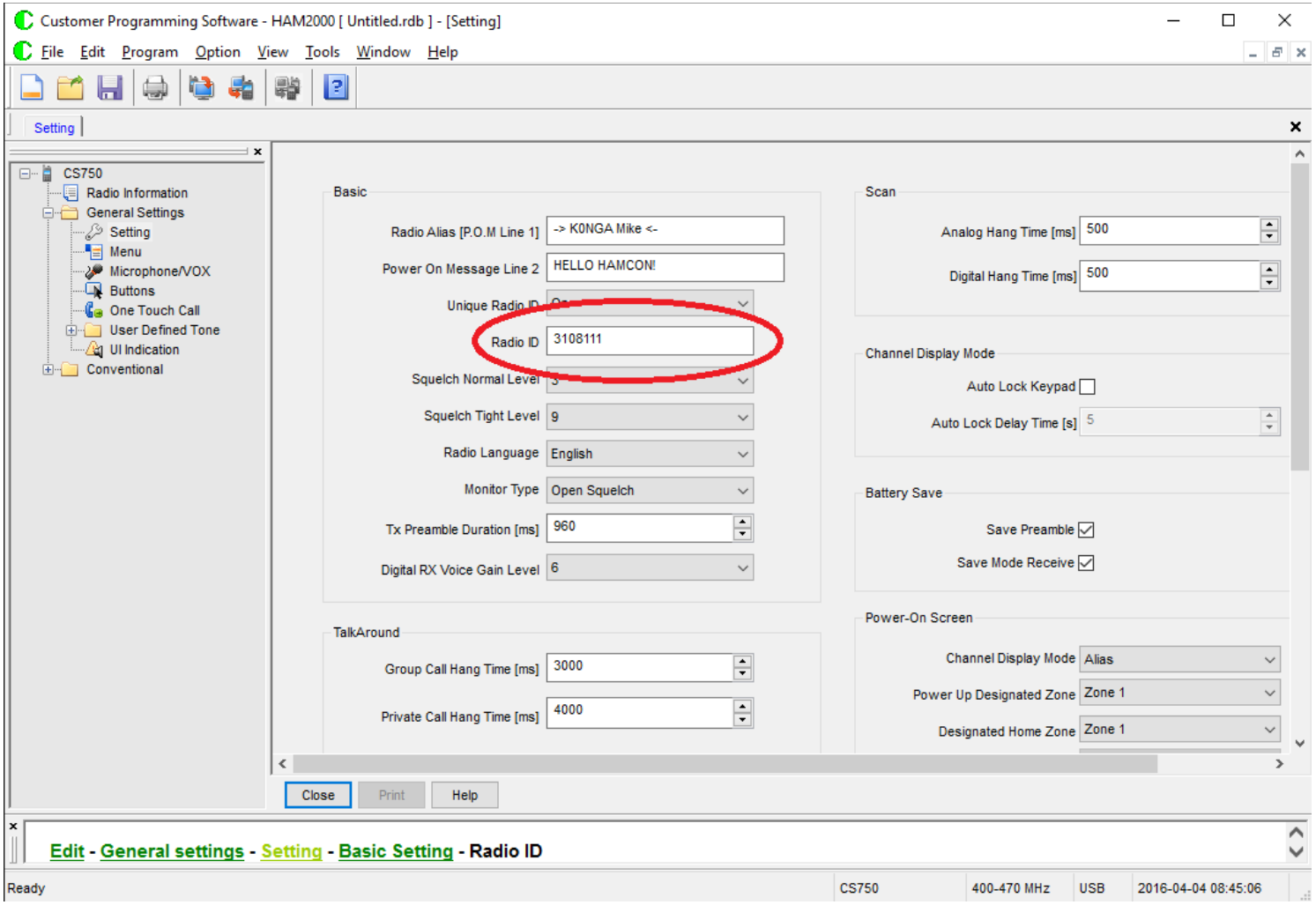
GET A RADIO

- You must have a Tier 2 DMR Radio (very common)
- You get what you pay for
  - Low cost radios on the market are not created equal
  - Ask around about user experience
  - Check the radio list at rmham.org
- Feature sets can vary widely among manufacturers
- Choice of radio is mainly a matter of what is important to you. I’m a contact list junkie.
- Recommendation: Get a radio that has sample codeplugs available, or is supported by the N0GSG utility.

GET A RADIO ID

- https://www.radioid.net/ -> Register ID -> User Registration (at the bottom of the page)
- Everything works best when each radio has a unique ID
- Put your Radio ID in the codeplug and upload to the radio
- Radio ID is NOT a replacement for ID’ing. You must still ID vocally every 10 minutes per FCC regulations.

RADIO ID


Customer Programming Software - HAM2000 [Untitled.rdb] - [Setting]
File Edit Program Option View Tools Window Help
Setting
CS750
Radio Information
General Settings
Setting
Menu
Microphone/VOX
Buttons
One Touch Call
User Defined Tone
UI Indication
Conventional
Basic
Radio Alias [P.O.M Line 1] -> K0NGA Mike <-
Power On Message Line 2 HELLO HAMCON!
Unique Radio ID On
Radio ID 3108111
Squelch Normal Level 3
Squelch Tight Level 9
Radio Language English
Monitor Type Open Squelch
Tx Preamble Duration [ms] 960
Digital RX Voice Gain Level 6
TalkAround
Group Call Hang Time [ms] 3000
Private Call Hang Time [ms] 4000
Scan
Analog Hang Time [ms] 500
Digital Hang Time [ms] 500
Channel Display Mode
Auto Lock Keypad
Auto Lock Delay Time [s] 5
Battery Save
Save Preamble
Save Mode Receive
Power-On Screen
Channel Display Mode Alias
Power Up Designated Zone Zone 1
Designated Home Zone Zone 1
Close Print Help
Edit - General settings - Setting - Basic Setting - Radio ID
Ready CS750 400-470 MHz USB 2016-04-04 08:45:06

LEVERAGE THE SAMPLE CODEPLUGS

- Available on the RMHAM Website
  - www.rmham.org
  - MotoTRBO/DMR -> Sample Codeplugs
- All RMHAM TRBO repeaters programmed in
- Quickest way to get on the air
- Use as a foundation for your own codeplug
- Use as a starting point for the N0GSG utility

ID YOUR TALK GROUP

- When calling, identify which talk group you are transmitting on.
- “This is K-0-N-G-A on Rocky Mountain”
- Many Hams scan various channels and may want or need to turn scan off and tune to your channel to respond.
- If you don’t ID the talk group, the responding ham may not know which channel to tune to.

TALK GROUPS AND REPEATER SLOTS

- Each repeater has 2 repeater slots (time slots)
- Each slot can handle 1 conversation at a time. Thus, each repeater can handle 2 simultaneous separate conversations
- Some networks allow multiple talk groups on the same repeater slot
- Only one talk group can be transmitting at a time on a single repeater slot
- It may be necessary to monitor the other talk groups on a repeater slot to determine if the slot is free to operate on

DMR NETS

- RMHAM TRBO Tech Net
  - First Saturday of the Month, 7:00 PM, Rocky Mountain talk group
- World Wide DMR-MARC Net
  - World Wide talk group, Saturdays, 16:00 UTC Summer, 17:00 UTC Winter
- DMR-MARC Tech Net
  - North America talk group, Thursdays, 01:00 UTC Summer, 02:00 UTC Winter (This translates to Wednesday Night in the States)

QUESTIONS?

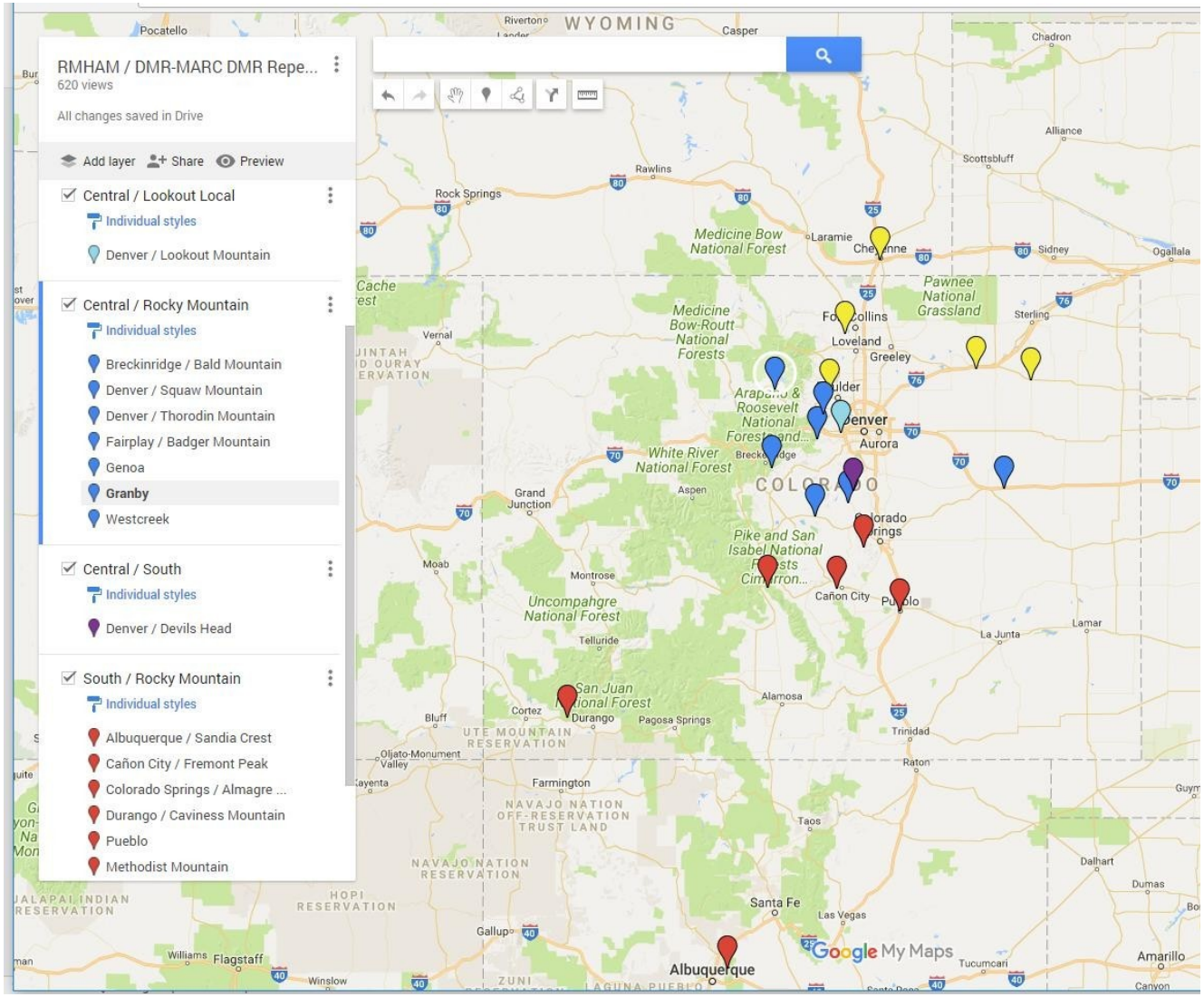
KNOW YOUR NETWORK

DMR LINKED REPEATER NETWORKS

AGENDA

- RMHAM DMR Network
- Network Map
- Operating Practices
- DMR-MARC
- Brandmeister
- Concepts
- Access Options

RMHAM DMR MAP



RMHAM DMR NETWORK

- Five Talk Groups: Rocky Mountain (wide), North, South, Central, and Lookout Local
- When contacting another ham, use the smallest coverage talk group possible
- If necessary, use Rocky Mountain to make contact, then move to a smaller coverage talk group if possible

ID YOUR TALK GROUP (REVISITED)

- When calling, identify which talk group you are transmitting on.
- “This is K-0-N-G-A on Rocky Mountain”
- Many Hams scan various channels and may want or need to turn scan off and tune to your channel to respond.
- If you don’t ID the talk group, the responding ham may not know which channel to tune to.

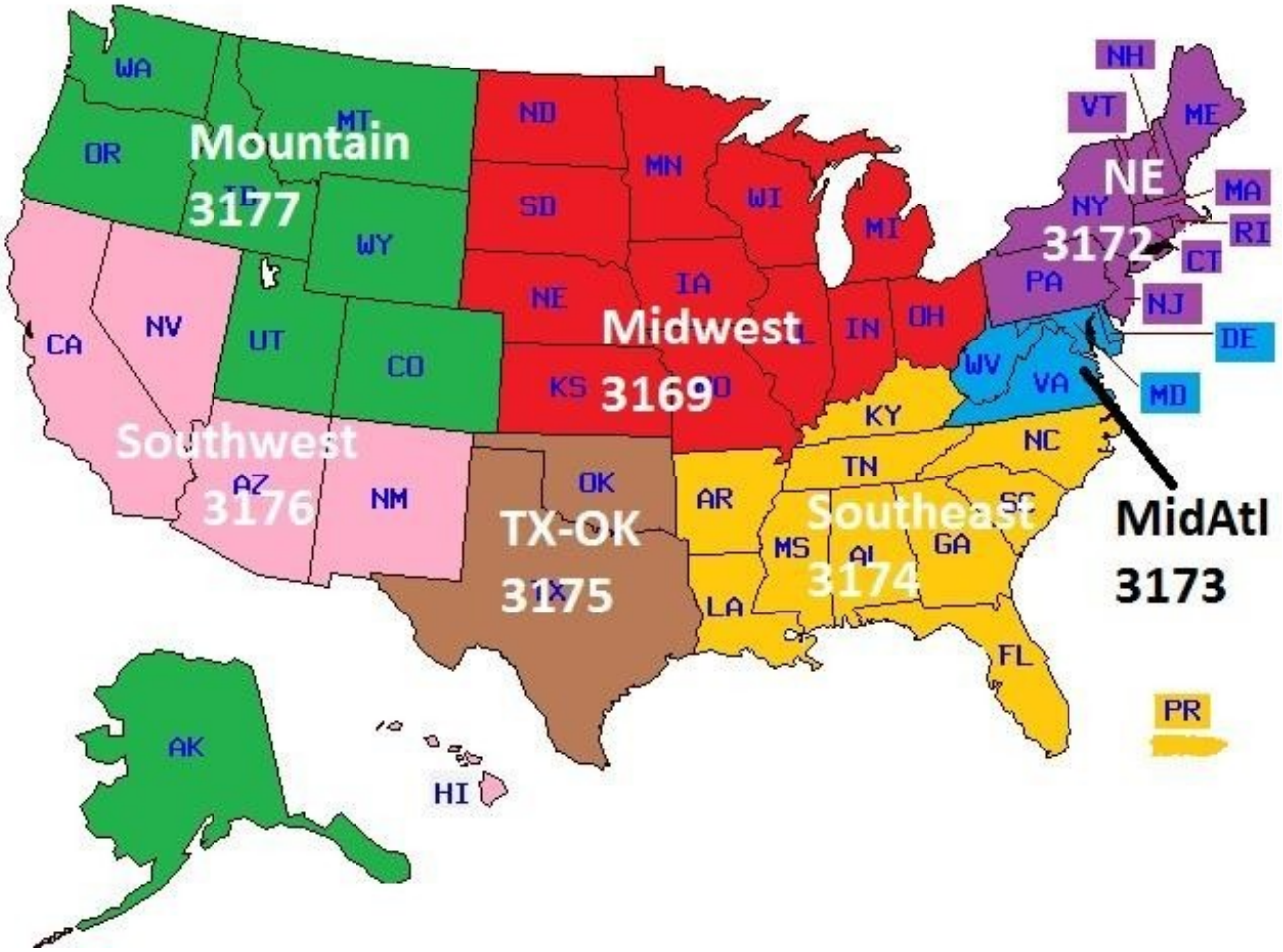
TALK GROUP COURTESTY

- Use the smallest area coverage talk group necessary for contact
- For example: In Denver, the smallest talk group coverage is “Lookout Local” (one repeater
- Use Rocky Mountain to initiate contact, then move to a “smaller” talk group if possible
- This leaves Rocky Mountain open for other Hams to make contact

DMR-MARC

- World Wide, MANY talk groups
- Most Talk Groups are static
- World Wide, World Wide English, North America, Local, US Regionals
- Colorado is in the Mountain regional talk group
- Also has User Activated Talk Groups, sometimes called Tactical Talk Groups (e.g., TAC310), which are only active when you transmit on them.

DMR-MARC US REGIONAL TALK GROUPS



BRANDMEISTER

- World Wide, MANY talk groups
- All Talk Groups are dynamic; A Talk Group can be made static on a repeater by the repeater operator
- All Talk Groups (unless made static on a repeater) are user activated
- Remote users cannot activate a Talk Group on a remote repeater
- Desired Talk Group must be programmed into the radio channel (with some advanced exceptions)

BRANDMEISTER

- Two ways to access the Brandmeister network:
- Traditional Repeater
- Brandmeister site has a map of all repeaters
- Work mostly like any other DMR repeater
- Hotspot
- Different types available
- Short-range, only practical for personal use
- OpenSpot currently to most widely used

DMR PROGRAMMING

Learn, you must.

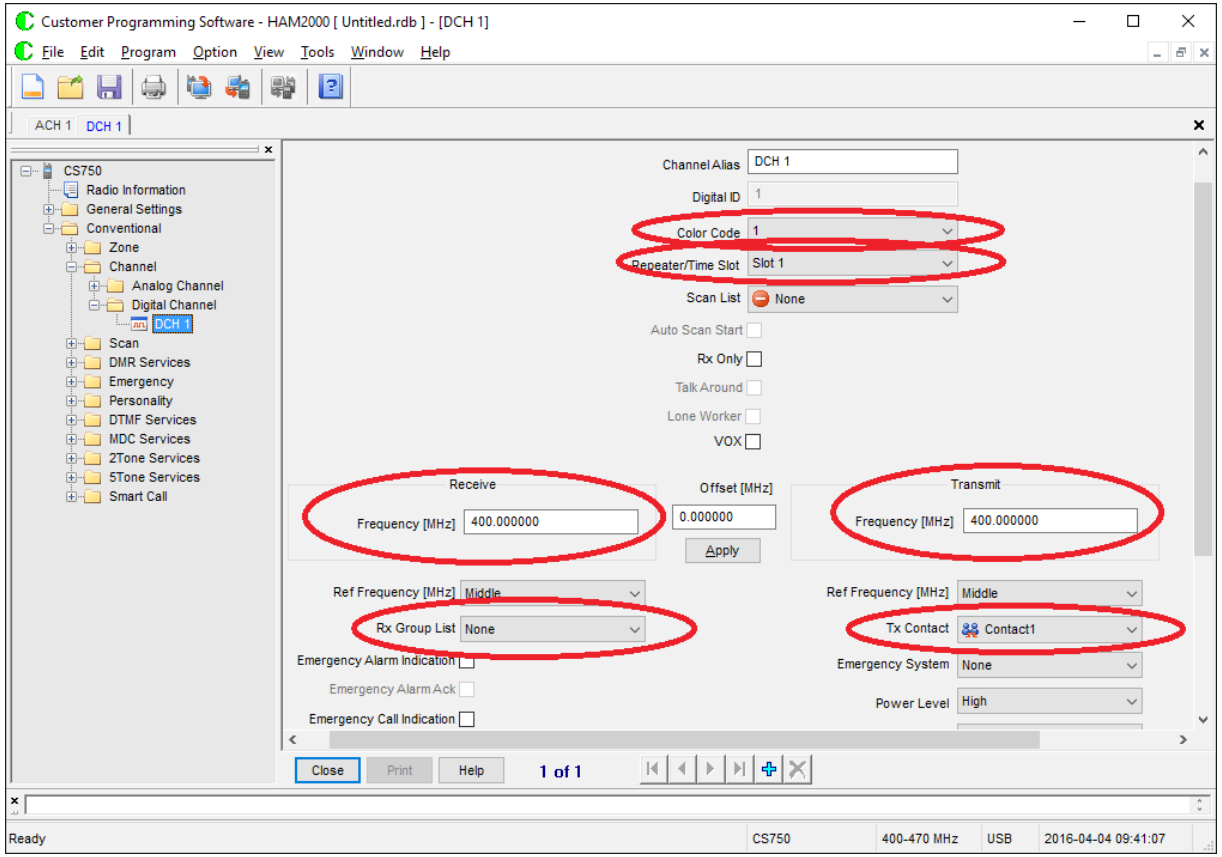
Your own radio, to program.

-Yoda

BASIC PROGRAMMING CONCEPTS

- In order to program a DMR radio for repeaters, you must know:
  - Repeater frequencies
  - Repeater Color Code
  - Desired Talk Group/Receive Group
  - The Repeater Slot that Talk Group is on

CHANNEL EXAMPLE



COLOR CODE

- DMR repeaters use a Color Code as the first access point after the receive frequency
- Color Codes are designed to allow two repeaters with the same frequency to operate effectively if they are relatively close to each other
- You must know the Color Code of the repeater in order to successfully use the repeater

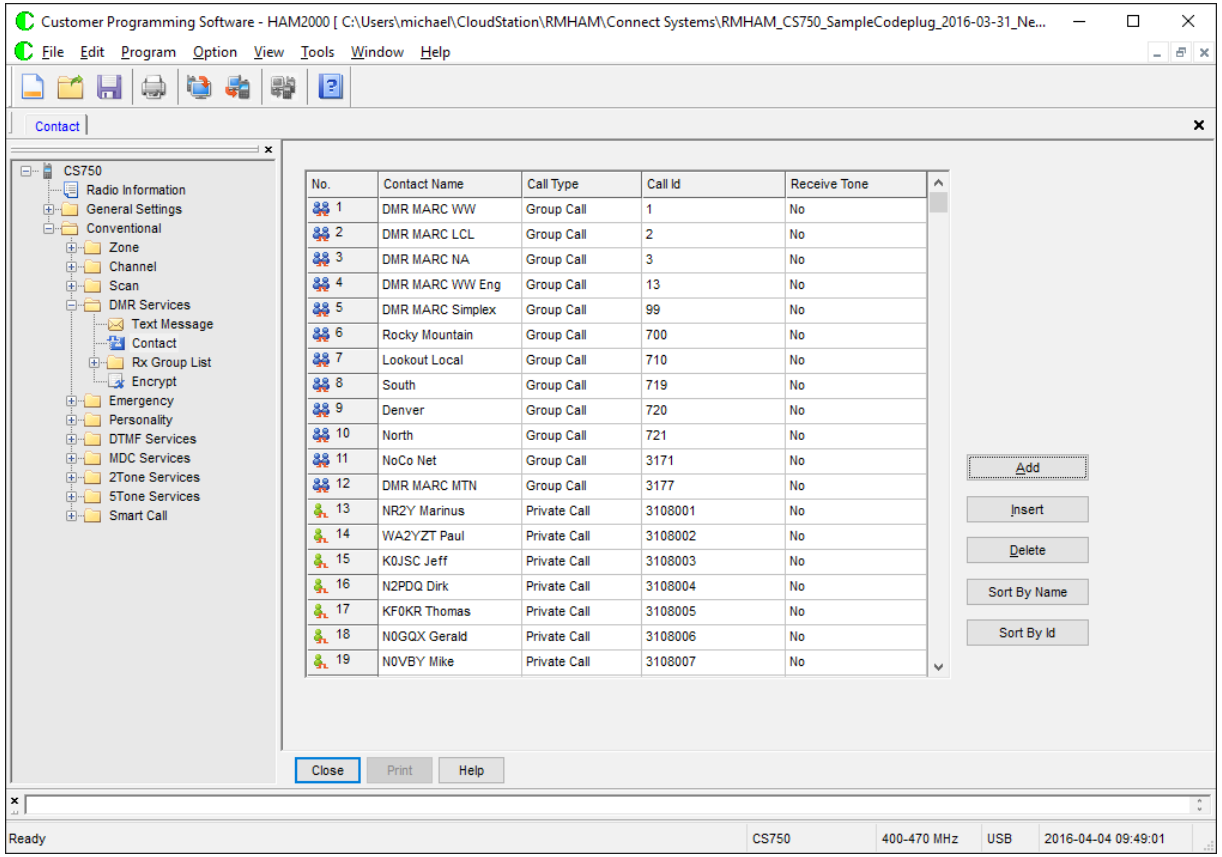
CONTACT LIST

- DMR radios use a Contact List for:
  - Private Call (used for Radio IDs)
  - Talk Groups (required for most repeaters)
  - All Call (often used for simplex)
- Radios with displays will show the Radio ID of person who is transmitting
- If you have the Radio ID in your radio’s Contact List, the contact name or tag will display instead of the Radio ID
- Typical contact names include call sign and name

TALK GROUPS

- Access Control (analogous to tones on analog radios) is accomplished with Talk Groups
- If a repeater uses Talk Groups, you must know which Talk Groups the repeater uses in order to use the repeater with your radio
- Talk Groups are assigned to a Repeater Slot in a repeater
- More than one Talk Group can be assigned to a single Repeater Slot, but only one Talk Group can use the slot at any given time

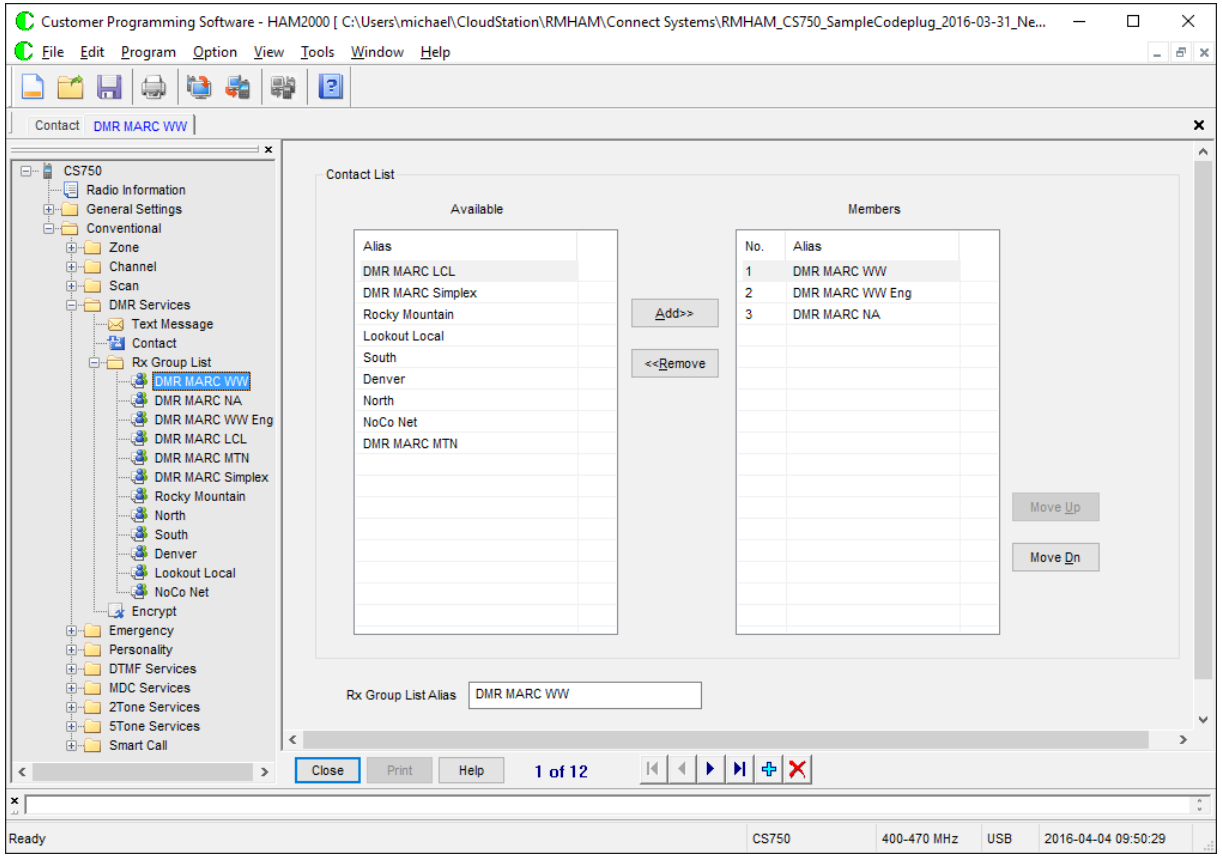
CONTACT LIST EXAMPLE



RECEIVE GROUPS

- Receive Groups are how DMR radios use Talk Groups when receiving signals
- Talk Groups are assigned to Receive Groups. Receive Groups are assigned to the receive frequency on the channel in your radio.
- More than one Talk Group can be assigned to a Receive Group
  - Recommended config by DMR-MARC
  - Can cause confusion when scanning
- Remember Mike’s DMR Doctrine

RECEIVE GROUP EXAMPLE



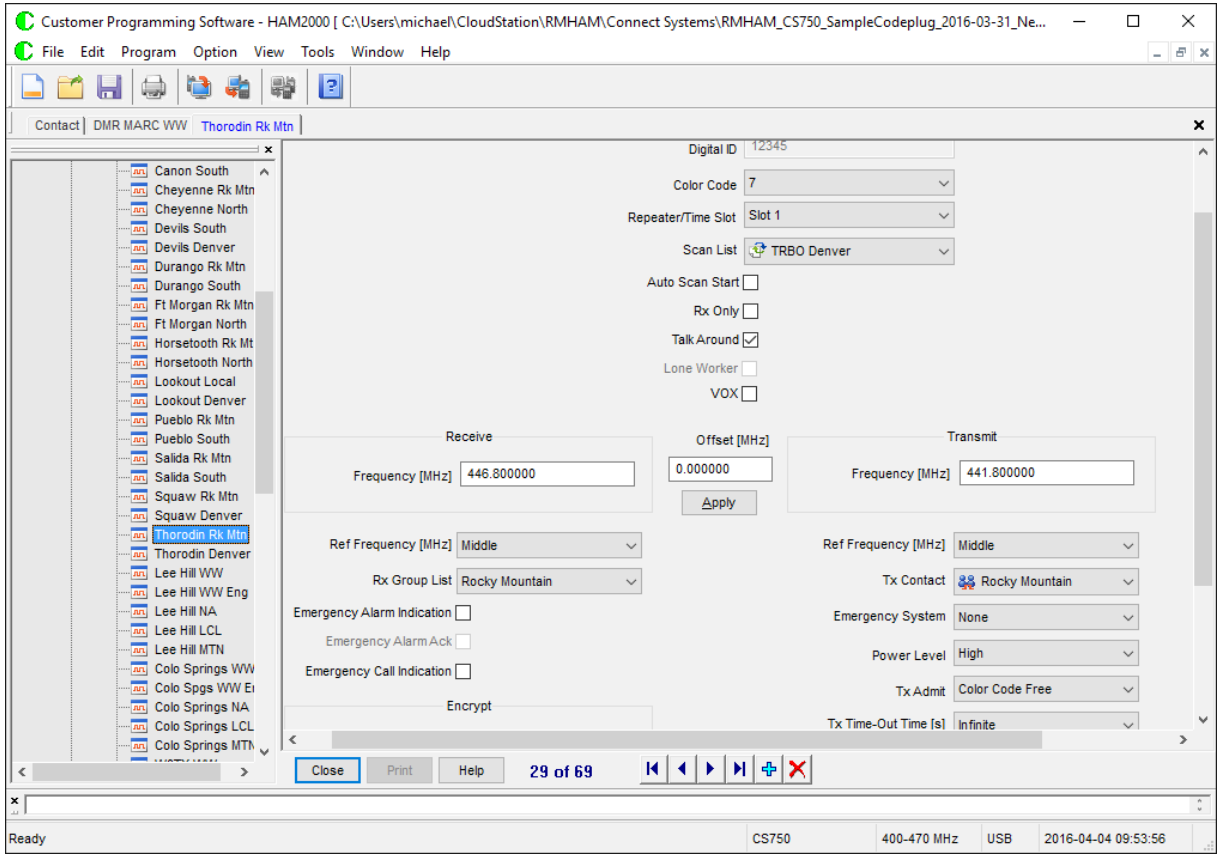
REPEATER SLOTS

- DMR repeaters have 2 “time slots” that share a frequency, allowing for two separate, simultaneous conversations
- This means one repeater can do the work of two while using less bandwidth than a single analog repeater
- You must know which Repeater Slot you wish to use in order to set up your radio (more on this later)

EXAMPLE CHANNELS

Channel	Color Code	Time Slot	Receive Frequency	Transmit Frequency	Talk Group
Squaw Rky Mtn	7	Slot 1	446.9375	441.9375	Rocky Mountain
Squaw Central	7	Slot 2	446.9375	441.9375	Central
Lee Hill WW	1	Slot 1	445.05	440.05	DMR MARC WW
Lee Hill WW Eng	1	Slot 1	445.05	440.05	DMR MARC WW Eng
Lee Hill NA	1	Slot 1	445.05	440.05	DMR MARC NA
Lee Hill LCL	1	Slot 2	445.05	440.05	DMR MARC LCL
Lee Hill MTN	1	Slot 2	445.05	440.05	DMR MARC MTN

EXAMPLE CHANNEL - RMHAM



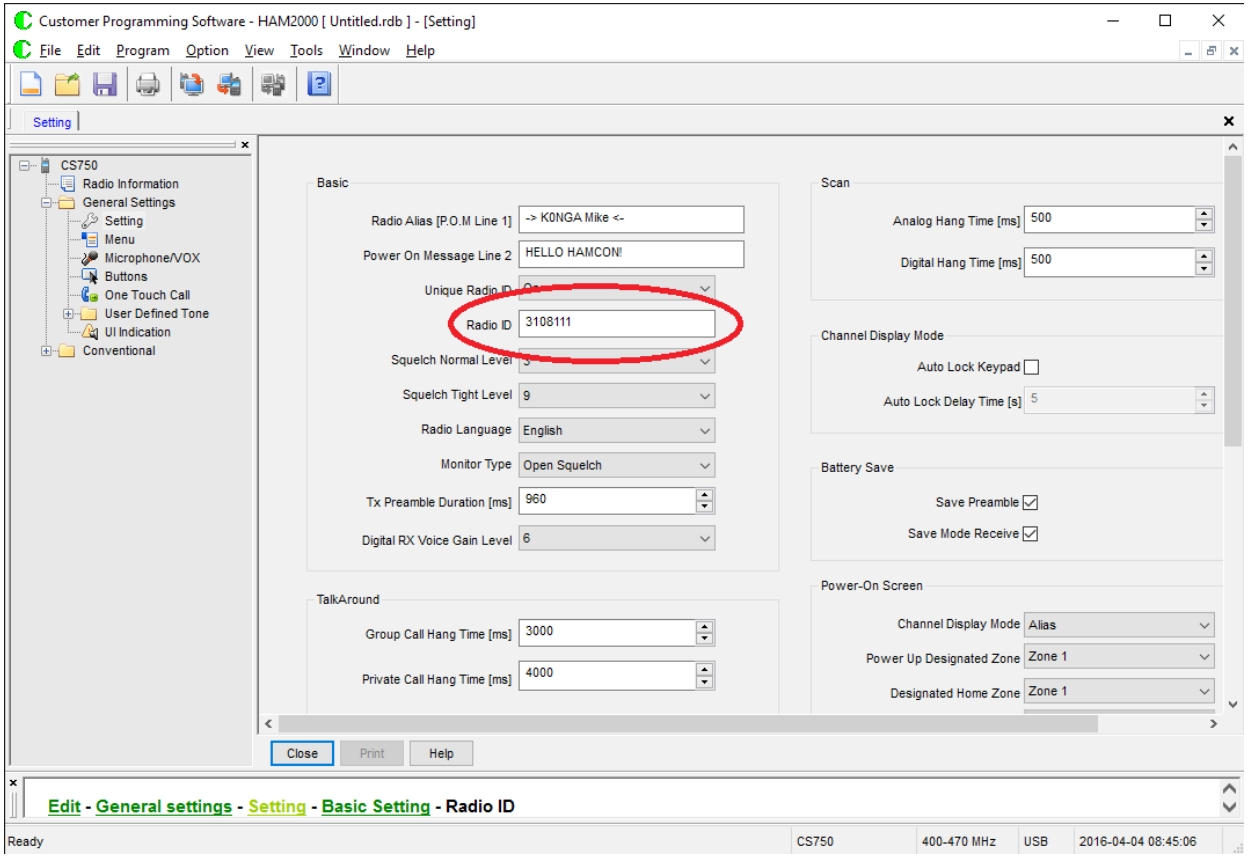
ADMIT CRITERIA

- Used to prevent transmit when a frequency is in use
- For Digital Channels, use “Color Code”
- For Analog Channels, do not use admit controls.
- Prevents “doubling” or transmitting at the same time without knowing
- Default settings in sample codeplugs

RADIO ID

- Identifies the radio to the DMR Repeater
- Each Radio’s ID should be unique on the repeater/network
- Not a replacement for Call Sign
- Required for operation with the repeater

RADIO ID


Customer Programming Software - HAM2000 [Untitled.rdb] - [Setting]
File Edit Program Option View Tools Window Help
Setting
CS750
Radio Information
General Settings
Setting
Menu
Microphone/VOX
Buttons
One Touch Call
User Defined Tone
UI Indication
Conventional
Basic
Radio Alias [P.O.M Line 1] -> K0NGA Mike <-
Power On Message Line 2 HELLO HAMCON!
Unique Radio ID
Radio ID 3108111
Squelch Normal Level
Squelch Tight Level 9
Radio Language English
Monitor Type Open Squelch
Tx Preamble Duration [ms] 960
Digital RX Voice Gain Level 6
TalkAround
Group Call Hang Time [ms] 3000
Private Call Hang Time [ms] 4000
Scan
Analog Hang Time [ms] 500
Digital Hang Time [ms] 500
Channel Display Mode
Auto Lock Keypad
Auto Lock Delay Time [s] 5
Battery Save
Save Preamble
Save Mode Receive
Power-On Screen
Channel Display Mode Alias
Power Up Designated Zone Zone 1
Designated Home Zone Zone 1
Close Print Help
Edit - General settings - Setting - Basic Setting - Radio ID
Ready CS750 400-470 MHz USB 2016-04-04 08:45:06

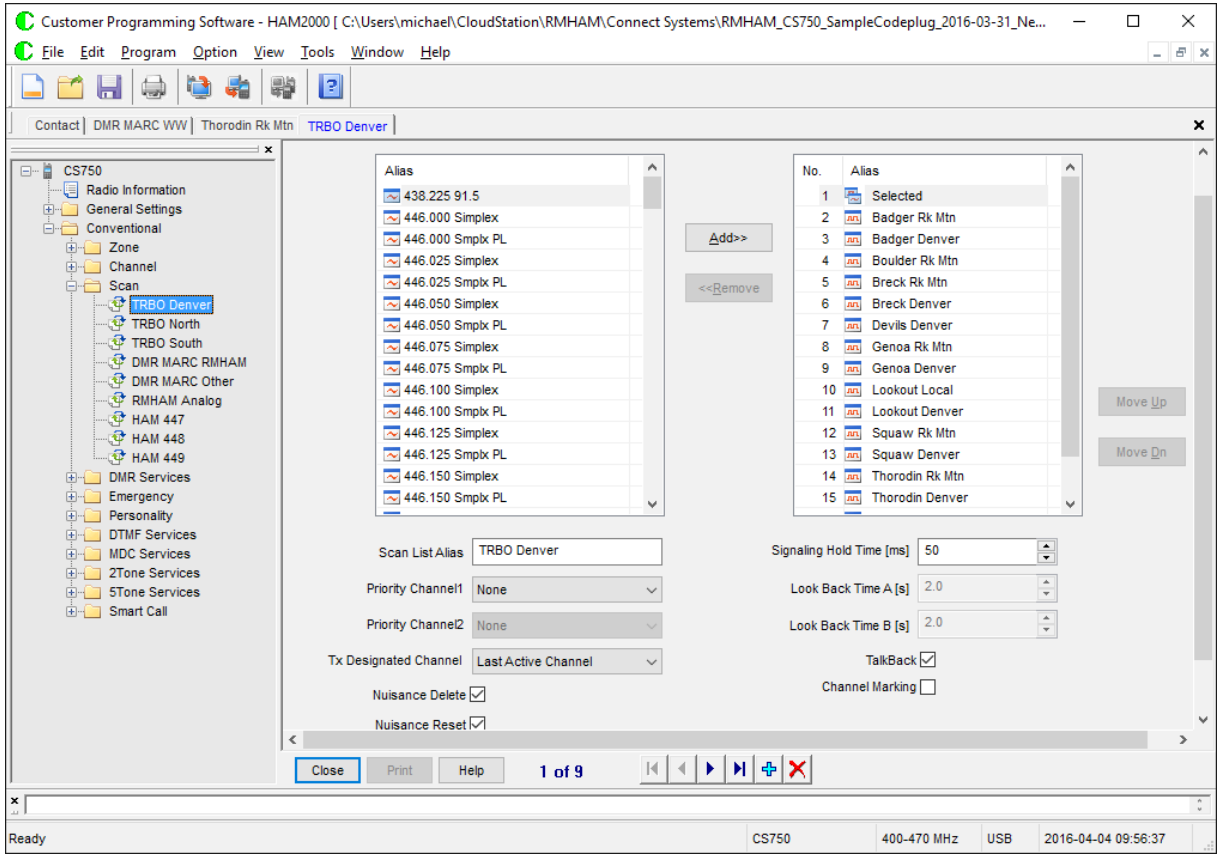
ZONES

- Channels are assigned to Zones
- Only one (1) Zone can be in use at a time
- On HTs, corresponds with channel selection dial
- Radios can have numerous zones
- Channels can be a member of more than one Zone

SCAN LIST

- Named list of channels grouped together
- List is assigned to a channel
- When that channel is activated, the list assigned to that channel will be scanned
- Lists can contain digital and analog channels
- Some radios have advanced scan list settings

SCAN LIST EXAMPLE



ROAMING

- Automatic feature available on some radios
  - Motorola, Hytera, Vertex Standard
- Radio measure signal strength of channels in a list, determines the strongest signal, and tunes to that channel
- Best use case is for times when a single talk group needs to be used but the user will be moving through a large area.

QUESTIONS?

STUFF AND THINGS

- RMHAM Website – http://www.rmham.org
- Interactive DMR repeater map: http://bit.ly/rmham-trbo-map
- Radio ID – https://www.radioid.net/
- DMR-MARC Website – http://www.dmr-marc.net
- Brandmeister
- Dashboard: https://brandmeister.network/
- Audio Feeds: http://hose.brandmeister.network/
- Wiki: https://wiki.brandmeister.network
- Contact Me: K0NGA@arrl.net