

Recent Interpretation Changes for GMRS Operations by the Federal Communications Commission

Salient FCC Regulations for General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS)

§ 95.1733 Prohibited GMRS uses.

- (a) In addition to the prohibited uses outlined in [§ 95.333 of this chapter](#), GMRS stations must not communicate:
- (8) Messages which are both conveyed by a wireline control link and transmitted by a GMRS station;

§ 95.1749 GMRS network connection.

Operation of a GMRS station with a telephone connection is prohibited, as in [§ 95.349](#). GMRS repeater, base and fixed stations, however, may be connected to the public switched network or other networks for the sole purpose of operation by remote control pursuant to [§ 95.1745](#).

FCC Interpretations for General Mobile Radio Service Operations

<https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/bureau-divisions/mobility-division/general-mobile-radio-service-gmrs>

Pre-August 2024

A GMRS licensee may use a combination of portable, mobile, fixed and repeater stations consistent with the operational and technical rules in Subpart E of Part 95. The use of some channels is restricted to certain types of stations and certain channels are reserved for voice-only operations, while other channels allow voice and data operations.

None of the GMRS channels are assigned for the exclusive use of any system. You must cooperate in the selection and use of the channels in order to make the most effective use of them and to reduce the possibility of interference.

You can expect a communications range of one to twenty-five miles depending on station class, terrain and repeater use. You cannot directly interconnect a GMRS station with the telephone network or any other network for the purpose of carrying GMRS communications, but these networks can be used for remote control of repeater stations.

August 14, 2024 Changes

A GMRS licensee may use a combination of portable, mobile, fixed, and repeater stations consistent with the operational and technical rules in Subpart E of Part 95. The use of some channels is restricted to certain types of stations. In addition, certain channels are reserved for voice-only operations, while other channels allow voice and limited data operations.

None of the GMRS channels are assigned for the exclusive use of any system. Licensees must cooperate in the selection and use of the channels under a “listen-before-talk” etiquette in order to use them most effectively and to reduce the possibility of interference.

A GMRS user can expect a communications range of one to twenty-five miles depending on station class, terrain, and repeater use. **GMRS stations cannot be interconnected with the public switched telephone network or any other network for the purpose of carrying GMRS communications, but these networks can be used for remote control of repeater stations. In other words, repeaters may not be linked via the internet—an example of an “other network” in the rules—to extend the range of the communications across a large geographic area. Linking multiple repeaters to enable a repeater outside the communications range of the handheld or mobile device to retransmit messages violates sections 95.1733(a)(8) and 95.1749 of the Commission’s rules, and potentially other rules in 47 C.F.R.**

Repeaters may be connected to the telephone network or other networks only for purposes of remote control of a GMRS station, not for carrying communication signals.

In addition to violating Commission rules, linking repeaters is not in the public interest. Because GMRS spectrum is limited and used on a shared “commons” basis, the service only works well on a localized basis when users can hear each other and cooperate in the sharing of channels. Linking repeaters not only increases the potential for interference, but also uses up a limited spectrum resource over much larger areas than intended, limiting localized availability of the repeater channels.

GMRS and the Family Radio Service (FRS), which share many of the GMRS channels, are intended for individuals such as family members and friends, scouting troops, emergency response groups, and hobbyists to communicate with each other over short distances, directly or through a repeater station. Linking repeaters, via the internet or other networks, undermines the purpose and usefulness of the GMRS and FRS.

Normally, you and your family members would communicate between yourselves directly or through a repeater station. The stations must be within the territorial limits of the fifty United States, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Insular areas.

(Note: The geographic boundaries in the second to last paragraph and the entire last paragraph in the previous guidance have been removed.)

In transient use, a mobile station from one GMRS system may communicate through a mobile relay station (repeater) in another GMRS system with the permission of its licensee. The communications may also be with mobile stations from other GMRS systems also with permission from the licensee to communicate through the mobile relay station.

Underlined guidance are additions to the August 2024 guidance. Bolded, underlined additions are significant changes in interpretation.

Salient FCC Regulations on Correspondence and Enforcement

§ 95.311 Correspondence and notices from the FCC.

Operators of Personal Radio Service stations must respond to and comply with official communications from the FCC.

- (a) The FCC may send a letter to the operator of a Personal Radio Service station requesting specific information about the Personal Radio Service station or its operation. Upon receipt of such a letter, the operator must respond in writing to the FCC office that sent the letter, within the time period stated in the letter. The written response must contain the information requested by the FCC, must be complete in itself, and should not rely on references to other communications or notices.
- (b) If it appears to the FCC that the operator of a Personal Radio Services station has violated the Communications Act or the FCC's rules, the FCC may send that operator an official notice concerning the apparent violation. Upon receipt of such official notice, the operator must respond in writing to the FCC office that sent the letter, within the time period stated in the letter and comply with all instructions in the notice concerning the response. The written response must contain a complete written statement that fully addresses each violation, reports any action that the operator has taken to correct the violation and to prevent it from happening again, and any other pertinent information, such as other operators or stations that may have caused the violation.

§ 95.313 Penalties for violations of the Communications Act or FCC rules.

Operators of Personal Radio Service stations may be assessed penalties for violations of the Communications Act and the FCC Rules.

- (b) If a Federal court finds that a Personal Radio Service station operator has willfully and knowingly violated any FCC rule, the operator may be fined up to \$500 for each violation, or in the case of a continuing violation, \$500 for each day that the violation continued. See section 502 of the Communications Act (47 U.S.C. 502).