

Good Day and thank you for taking the time to contact me. I'm Dan (KL1JP) and webmaster for the Fairbanks Radio Club - AARC with our website URL at www.kl7kc.com

I'd be happy to answer your query, provide additional information and support for your trip. Feel free to use the webmaster@kl7kc.com to contact me. If I don't know an answer to your question, I can point you to someone more skilled and I will do that.

For the average trip to Alaska and especially the Interior, a dual band radio and a moderate high-gain vehicle antenna will work in most locations. I say "most locations" because Alaska and the Yukon are very large places. VHF radio is line-of-sight after all, so hills and mountains will block signals. While on the Alaska and Yukon road system, most ham radio equipped vehicles monitor 146.52 simplex. When near larger urban centers; Fairbanks, Nenana, Denali Park and Anchorage, etc...., you should change radio frequency to access the local repeaters. I would advise you to check a reliable repeater guide or local radio club web site for active repeaters in your traveling area and their necessary CTCSS tones and offsets.

For Fairbanks, the main repeater is located on top of Ester Dome. It uses 146.88 (CTCSS 103.5 negative split) and can be heard from as far away as 30+ miles. In addition to the main Ester Dome repeater system, there are several new System Fusion Radio digital repeaters accessible within the Fairbanks area. A few can be heard as far away as Delta Junction (IGA supermarket parking lot using 25w and a directional yagi). Although many of the repeaters may seem unattended and quiet, I assure you several club members monitor 24/7 so if you get on the repeater and ask questions, you'll likely get a response.

The Yukon Territory repeater system is hugely successful and can be utilized while traveling the Alaska Highway road system. <http://yara.ca/repeaters/repeaters.htm> In addition to their radio repeater systems, there is fairly good aprs coverage along the road system from Alberta through British Columbia, the Yukon and in Alaska. The APRS system in Canada and Alaska uses 144.39 MHz.

In the last few years, Alaskan cell phone coverage has gotten much better along the major road systems and in urban areas. Cell communications is provided in Alaska by AT&T, Verizon and by several local providers such as GCI.

However, stating all the above information, Alaska and the Yukon are big places and you will simply be out of communications range for part of your journey. That's just the way it is.

Several of us are trying to expand the existing aprs system and most summers I see motorcycles and vehicles carry aprs trackers and watch their travels via the internet. Aprs also allows simple messaging so that can be an alternative for you too. Aprs works well using the dual band radio you will bring.

Local ham guru Jerry (KL7EDK) has one of 5 worldwide aprs/winlink email systems here in Fairbanks. Winlink is a world wide access system for radio hosted email. Both 2m and HF. Think sailboats and how they keep in touch... you can do email from anywhere to anywhere using an HF radio and winlink.

Winlink 2000 access in Alaska

If you plan to visit Alaska and have HF capability then you should do well for access to the Winlink System. There are HF RMS Stations in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Inside Alaska 40 and 80 meter will probably work best for your connections to these RMS Stations.

Anchorage RMS has HF access on 4 bands. 80,40,30,and 20 meters. Your current station list for Airmail or Winlink Express should have the correct frequency listings. (WL7CVG)

Fairbanks RMS has HF access on 4 bands. 80,40,30,and 20 meters. Your current station list for Airmail or Winlink Express should have the correct frequency listing. Winmor is accepted on 80 and 40 meters. Contact Jerry (KL7EDK) for additional information or clarification.

Both of these RMS stations also support VHF ports. Digipeater are available in some areas. In addition to WL7CVG in Anchorage there are a couple other RMS Stations on VHF. KL7AA-10 and KL7JFT-10

There are other VHF RMS Stations outside the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas. In Valdez is AL4O-10, and in the Central Area is KL7GS-10.

If you have any specific questions drop a note to any of the RMS sysops. We will be glad to answer your questions.

Here are some cities and their available communications. Starting north and going south.

Circle: aprs and 2m repeater (if porky is repaired), winlink (email) for 2m. No cell.

Fairbanks: 2m FM, 2m repeater, aprs, winlink (email) for 2m and HF and cell coverage.

Delta Junction: 2m FM, 2m repeater, 2m digital repeater (25watts needed), aprs, winlink (email) for 2m and HF and cell coverage.

Tok: aprs and cell coverage.

For points between Tok and the Yukon: cell is spotty but aprs is good

Cantwell: cell and aprs

Denali Park: 2m repeater, aprs and cell coverage.

Anchorage: 2m FM, 2m repeater, aprs, winlink (email) for 2m and HF and cell coverage.

For road traveling in Alaska and Yukon, most sit on 146.52 simplex.

You need to just be aware that hills and mountain ranges cut off radio communications. Ditto for cell phones. After all VHF is line-of-sight.

If there is some medical reason you absolutely need to stay in touch, I'd recommend an iridium phone. You'd be guaranteed almost 100% communications.

Please let me know if I can answer other questions.

AARC repeater link

<http://k17kc.com/repeaters.html>

Also there are several new digital repeaters going on line this summer.

While traveling, please consider putting a 2m APRS tracking device in your vehicle. These are 2m TNC's (modem) which connect into your 2m radio and beacon a digital packet (a short burst signal) to available digi-peaters and from there, onto an internet gateway (iGATE) and are then displayed on a series of the internet maps. The process allows almost near-time display of your present location along with some minor information, allowing family and friends to follow your exploits and adventures. In Interior Alaska, we have an ever expanding APRWS tracking system and iGate network. Aprs will work from Whitehorse and Dawson into Alaska with some spotty areas in the valleys. The aprs tools also allows for limited messaging.

While in Fairbanks, please consider attending the AARC club meeting at 7 PM on the first Friday of the Month. We hold meetings at Hutchison Career Center which is located at 3750 Geist Rd (near the intersection of Geist and University Ave.). Easy access and very informal.

The Interior NET meets every Thursday evening at 7PM using the Ester Dome Repeater. The Ester Dome Repeater frequency is 146.88 (PL 103.5 negative split). Feel free to listen in, local ham radio news or even give a call in. As a guest, we'd love to hear from you!

If you have internet access, via laptop or even smartphone, there are a variety of web cameras that you can access to preview weather conditions. The better site I recommend is <http://avcams.faa.gov/sitelist.php> Here you will find many locations in British Columbia (BC), the Yukon and Alaska. It's always nice to know conditions before you arrive.

Sent from Dan/KL1JP