

As a licensed amateur radio operator in good standing, I am opposed to the regulatory acceptance of encryption being authorized on all amateur voice communication modes. Doing so would contradict the intent of amateur radio, and with the availability of amateur equipment to just about anyone, open a Pandoras Box regarding Homeland Security and the welfare of general public safety. Public Safety encryption cannot go wholesale to terrorists, anarchists, or criminals. This is why encryption must remain under the complete control of trained and otherwise qualified professionals to manage information integrity.

Amateur radio is for everyone that is lawfully licensed to participate in it, and it is not intended to be restricted to a privileged few as encryption would certainly do. Licensed and authorized amateur radio operators not regularly involved in emergency services would be deprived of their licensed right to contribute amateur radio services and responsibilities. Encrypted equipment would eliminate legitimate open-air calls for assistance and the transmission of emergency information. Any emergency call for assistance is a priority that must not be intentionally blocked, cloaked, or anyway ignored. A life could depend on it.

If there is an encryption need during an emergency being assisted amateur operators, please continue to allow the professional emergency responders complete oversight of its management. That is where it belongs, and not on our airways. To be sure, amateur radio has been and will continue to support public safety agencies in emergencies, as needed. As needed means the public safety agencies will determine how. Public safety agencies have contingency plans and systems in place that have proven adequate in such situations. In such situations the use amateur radio equipment should be open, clear, and not encrypted. Public safety agencies understand this and are not requiring amateur radio operators to encrypt communications. If a reason exists that open and clear communications cannot be used, then the public safety agencies should maintain this responsibility and not the amateur radio community. Since proposed encryption on the amateur frequencies will impact on professional public safety operations, it would remain beneficial to seek any concerns or questions that this sector may have prior to a determination on RM-11699. After all, our role is to support them, and not to usurp their authority or mission.