

A Guide to Buying GMRS Radios

By Woody Phillips KJ7YYI / WRMK486

DISCLAIMER: This guide is based on MY experience. Your mileage may vary and I am NOT suggesting you buy ANY radio mentioned here. The radios mentioned below are what I use as a fully FCC licensed GMRS and Amateur Radio operator. Use these as a GUIDE ONLY!

FRS or GMRS, Which Do You Need

This depends on what you want to do.

FRS

If your goal is to be able to LISTEN to the GMRS Neighborhood Radio Watch, and on occasion talk around the house/yard/street on a 2-way radio, then a pair of FRS radios is perfectly sufficient. These radios are inexpensive, have non-removable stubby antennas, are low power, and do NOT require an FCC License.

My FRS radios: 2 Radioddity FS-T1 FRS radios - Includes everything you need for \$35 + tax

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07T5DSJGQ/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&th=1

GMRS

If your goal is to be able to talk farther than ¼ mile you will need more power and a better antenna so we are now talking about GMRS and there are many options, all of which require buying an FCC License that is good for 10 years and covers your entire family for \$35.

HT or Handie-Talkie: Most handheld GMRS radios are capable of up-to 5 watts. That is the maximum permitted on channels 1-7 and if it is a TRUE GMRS Radio (if it says GMRS on the box) it will automatically drop the power to .5 watts on channels 8-14 and go back to 5 watts for channels 15-22. Make sure your Handie-Talkie is “repeater capable” or words to that affect so that it can be programmed to talk through a repeater to all your neighbors in town, or farther.

My GMRS handheld radio: 1 BAOFENG GMRS Radio GM-15 Pro \$28.59 + tax

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09NZBPW4R/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&th=1

Mobile GMRS: A mobile radio is generally capable of transmitting 20 to 50 watts depending on the size of the radio and the amount you want to spend. You will also need an antenna and a way to mount it to your vehicle. Many radios come WITHOUT an antenna so be sure to check.

Note: Some people like to use amateur radio (ham) mobiles for GMRS and while they work well, be aware that these are generally not FCC approved for GMRS use.

Here are examples of very good GMRS mobile radios that plug into your cigarette lighter or accessory port: [Radioddity DB20-G GMRS Mobile | 20W | 500 Channels | UHF VHF Scanner](#) | or

[Radioddity DB25-G GMRS Mobile Radio | 25W | Quad Watch | UHF VHF Scann](#) or

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Mobile GMRS (continued)

https://www.amazon.com/BTECH-GMRS-50V2-Customizable-Compatible-Broadcast/dp/B0BNLT88FD/ref=asc_df_B0BNLT88FD/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=647314916867&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=6034818672085012808&hvpon e=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9030177&hvtargid=pla-1989666462644&psc=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwyNSoBhA9EiwA5aYIb7e7DbkJt5Tz5cawBy7yA96rMEFbv-jRA3tVP-cgACfeVg2IeCOeexoCcb4QAvD_BwE

If your mobile radio does NOT include an antenna, something like this should work (this one INCLUDES the mount): https://www.amazon.com/Authentic-Nagoya-UT-72G-Magnetic-Additional/dp/B09TPZ221K/ref=d_pd_sim_sccl_3_1/135-8104840-5360731?pd_rd_w=OvOLG&content-id=amzn1.sym.eb616d98-73b6-4f12-8913-a35cc29165e9&pf_rd_p=eb616d98-73b6-4f12-8913-a35cc29165e9&pf_rd_r=25CV8YPZTTK63VNDAHQ8&pd_rd_wg=WAbMU&pd_rd_r=c04913af-a04f-4d9c-aa15-7a865db43a61&pd_rd_i=B09TPZ221K&psc=1

If it INCLUDES an antenna, make sure it also includes an antenna MOUNT. If it does not, I use a magnet mount made by Comet for my mobile antennas. Ignore the claims because **THESE WILL SCRATCH YOUR PAINT!** Mine is similar to this:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AR086IQ/ref=ppx_od_dt_b_asin_title_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

“Most” mounts come with an attached cable but also double check that.

GMRS Base Stations: A Base Station is meant for fixed use in your home or office. Generally, you will want to put an antenna on your roof or up on a pole outside your home and “most” people use a higher power (up to 50 watts maximum) mobile attached to a 13.8v power supply to make their base station.

For example, I use a 50-watt mobile radio connected to a 30-amp 13.8v power supply with a 50’ length of coaxial cable that goes to a copper pipe J-Pole antenna on my roof. From Strawberry I can talk to the repeaters at Diamond Point in Star Valley and Crown King near Prescott.

This starts to get a bit expensive so unless you are quite serious about all this, **OR IF WE ARE NOT ABLE TO SECURE A REPEATER**, you may not need this much. For “most” families, a mobile rig in their car or truck (or both) and a couple of handie-talkies is more than sufficient. For others a handie-talkie may be plenty, especially if the repeater installation works out and has the power to reach all of our neighborhoods.

I am not going to offer any Base Station suggestions here as I do not want to get blamed if you spend a bunch and it doesn’t work out. But, if you have read everything to here, I think you will get the idea.

So hopefully this will help you start your search for the best radios for your situation.

Email me with questions. tekboss@gmail.com