

Radio Estate Tips and Good Practices

This Check List is From-----HamEstate.com

Here are some good practices to get the best value back for your hard earned money that you invested into your hobby:

- Keep original boxes and manuals of all your equipment.
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- Keep sales receipts of purchases.
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- **Develop and MAINTAIN a detailed inventory.**
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- Make sure your spouse or children are aware of who you want to handle the sales of your ham station.
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- Make double sure that only licensed and insured companies remove antennas and towers. A lawsuit deriving from death or injury by someone removing antennas and towers "for free" on your property can ruin your loved ones and estate.
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- Do not let bargain hunters walk off with part of your station before consulting a professional company or trusted ham as this will leave your family with expenses to remove towers and antennas.
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- Ham friends are usually of great help but they also have families, jobs, schedules and can help to an extent. In many cases equipment is sold for less than its worth. Consider discussing this and coming up with a detailed plan ahead of time.
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- Make sure your family points any and ALL inquiries about your ham station directly to the company [or people] handling your ham estate. Ensure that they are firm on this.

-----**Summary**-----

Make an excel spreadsheet list-----quick and easy-----to develop the inventory.

Use that info to build the data sheet with pictures for each piece of equipment. Have a separate WORD file for each piece of equip. That way you can have 2 pages ---front and back----if needed for an item, or group of items that need to stay together.

Put the printed Excel and Word documents in a 3 ring binder,

ALONG WITH

a CD / DVD / ThumbDrive containing all the files.

Store one of these electronic copies in Safety Deposit Box

AND

UPDATE it when the data changes.

-----Mega estates are a problem. -----

For normal folks, get a \$1.29 3-ring binder and write descriptions and disposal instructions for each radio:

Collins 30L-1. \$400 - \$750. Sell on eBay. Local sale at \$550 is acceptable. Description: linear amplifier, acquired 1980, tubes work, in regular service, has soft key, will work with modern radios, manual is in filing cabinet. Sell with manual, all attached cables.

And put a string tag on each radio on the back with an abbreviated description:

Collins 30L-1, \$400 - \$750, see the book "About the radios".

Do NOT save the information in an Excel spreadsheet, no one has time to play computer forensics. Use pen and paper and a well marked 3 ring binder.

[ALTERNATE OPINION--use excel, print it out, put in 3-ring binder WITH file on disk in binder as well.]

On the front of the book, list **TRUSTED** friends with names, email and phone numbers. Also include general guidance on selling on eBay, widows assistance if your club offers that.

Keep the book up to date, as if someone's life depended on it.

If you decide to leave your estate to a ham club to dispose of, make sure they know what you're doing. Dumping a basement full of stuff from junk to treasures for some guy to sort through is not a gift.! Especially with the attorney breathing down his neck to finish up so that the case can be closed.

One last item. Take a few minutes to write down which of your ham buddies would be a good candidate to help and discuss this with your hamster friends. Put some orders down in writing so your widow has some direction. This is not an easy thing to do but nobody lives forever and as we all know life changes suddenly.

<http://www.amateurradiobluebook.com/bluebook.html>----- no longer available--8-14-18

My granddad inventoried his stuff. Parts? Just inventory the box. "Box of leaded parts". "Box of PC boards with parts on them." "Box of spools of wire".

That said, 5END's suggestion to use a spreadsheet and print the spreadsheet with the filetree/filename on the print out is excellent.

Count on paper and a 3 ring binder, everything else is too much trouble. Paper and a binder marks you as a pro.

The boxes 'o junk? Label them, "Take to the next hamfest and dump as **Phree Stuph.**" It's too much trouble to sell them.

digital cameras are inexpensive, use one to inventory your gear.

on the back of each photo jot down what the item is, approx date you acquired it and approx. price you can get for it if you sold it today with the date.

this can help with the estate when the time comes.

Cull the herd, make a list on paper and clearly marked in a 3 ring binder, label the parts bin "Sell as Parts on eBay 'treasure trove' for whatever you can get." or just have someone Freefest it.

Model trains, guns, knives, Hummels, woodworking tools, fountain pens, boats, airplanes, etc.

>>>do not put your family through this. as your age increases and your health decreases get rid of the junk<<<

In addition to the equipment inventory, it might be a good idea to catalog your "friends" as well. It might be surprising how many "lifelong friends" show up to "help." If your surviving spouse has a list of who's who, and who's a flake, (otherwise known as a "s--t list") it might come in handy.

After going through this estate sale I began to ponder how my spouse would sell off my radio equipment in the event I become a SK. Even with a small station, I came to the conclusion it would present a burden, so what I ended up doing was to create a notebook which lists each piece of equipment (with picture), along with the model and serial number and any internal options, a price range the equipment should be worth on the used market, and even a paragraph or two describing the equipment - which could be used for the actual sales advertisement. Then I added information about where the equipment should be advertised. Periodically I review the notebook and adjust prices as necessary.

Sounds a bit gruesome to contemplate, doesn't it? Yep it is, but that's offset by knowing the effort will make life a bit easier for my spouse when I head to SK land. Oh... an added benefit. The notebook of information (which by the way, should be safely stored (a fire proof safe, safe deposit box, etc), also doubles nicely for insurance purposes in case of fire or theft.

This gets back to a loose leaf notebook and a page for each radio. Forget the box of wires, the bin of connectors, no one cares. Even valuable screws and knobs, unless sold on eBay as "Collins and Hallicrafters Knobs and screws" should go to the Phree Stuph table at the next hamfest.

Another possibility, I know hamfest regular tailgaters. Get their phone number and mark the boxes of small stuff, "Give to XXXX at 999.999.9999."

"This gets back to a loose leaf notebook and a page for each radio."

Which can always be put into a database at some point, keeping the notebook as a backup. Maybe put a CD or thumbdrive in the notebook too.

"Forget the box of wires, the bin of connectors, no one cares. Even valuable screws and knobs, unless sold on eBay as "Collins and Hallicrafters Knobs and screws" should go to the **Phree Stuph** table at the next hamfest."

They should be inventoried, though. "Box of connectors, **FTAGH**" (**Free To A Good Home**). One page could cover a lot of stuff that way.

The Inventory List



Inventory tag number 14:

This 1943 Vibroplex Lightning Bug, serial number 125445, is complete and operational.

It has had some parts replaced with original Vibroplex parts.

This bug would sell for around \$100 in 2017.

Catalog your radio gear to make it easier for your loved ones to pass it along once you've joined the ranks of Silent Keys.

Noel Beardsley, K8NB

At some point, each of us will become a Silent Key, and someone will have to deal with our collection of possessions, including our Amateur Radio equipment. Whoever has to sort through and dispose of our equipment may have very little knowledge of what the equipment is, and what it is worth. Personally, I would like to make things as easy for my family as possible after I pass away. I would also like to ensure they get fair value for all of my gear.

Put Together an Inventory

I suggest that you put together a complete inventory of your equipment, with the corresponding current market value for each piece. Though there are many cataloguing systems to employ, I decided to use a single page for each item of equipment. I typed pages on my computer and then printed them out and put them in our file cabinet. A separate page for each piece makes it easy to update the inventory if gear is added or removed, and printed sheets allow for easy access. I would suggest also leaving a digital copy of all the inventory sheets on a USB drive. This will make the pictures available if needed for an online auction site or some other use.

A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words

I started with a picture of each piece of equipment. I try to include all the accessories that would go with the equipment in the same picture. For example, if you have an HF transceiver with a matching desk mic, get the mic in the picture. If needed, you can use more than one picture on a page.

These pictures do not have to have great artistic quality; you just want a clear picture that will allow your family to identify the equipment.

By the Numbers

My wife suggested that I also put a small sticker on each piece of equipment with a unique “tag number” on it. That same number should be included on the inventory page. Physically separate accessories that go with the main equipment should have the same number as the main piece of gear. For example, in the case of the HF transceiver with the matching desk mic, if the transceiver’s tag number in your inventory system is 7, then the mic’s tag number should be 7 as well.

Write a Description

The next step will be to write up a concise description of the equipment pictured. Include the manufacturer and model number, an approximate age, and a one-sentence description of what it does. Remember that whoever has to dispose of the contents of your shack may not be familiar with any of the equipment and might not be able to tell the difference between an HF transceiver, a 2-meter radio, or a general-coverage receiver.

Breaking down the description further, make sure to include an honest explanation of the condition, containing details of its functionality, improvements or repairs that have been made, and recurring issues. For example, I have a couple of older TEN-TEC transceivers that need the permeability tuned oscillator (PTO) disassembled, cleaned, and re-lubricated every few years. Notes on the last time this was done are included on its inventory page.

Honesty is the best policy here. The person selling off your gear likely will not know the condition, and you don’t want them to be liable if you don’t include necessary information. People will understand, particularly

with older equipment, that it may not be perfect.

List an Estimated Value

This can be the tough part. You’ll want to figure out what you think would be a reasonable price that someone would pay for each item. Be careful that emotion does not come into play here. For example, I have a Drake TR-4 that was the first new radio my father ever had. I also made my first contact on that radio. To me, that TR-4 is priceless. Once I am gone, it is worth maybe \$200 to someone else, including the power supply and speaker. On the other hand, if you paid a premium price for something and it is still worth it, list that value.

Designating a Recipient

If there are some things you want left to a specific recipient, include that as well, whether you want it to go to a friend or family member or be donated to a local club. In my case, I would like to have the TR-4 that was my father’s first radio offered to my sister, who is also a ham.

Trying to Account for Everything

This is not going to be a 1-day project. Take it one item at a time, and don’t take rarely used or mobile equipment for granted. Additionally, do not forget small items, like telegraph bugs, that may be quite valuable.

You will have to decide on where you draw the line, however. Certainly you won’t inventory every connector, resistor, or old SWR meter that you have. In my case, I set a value of about \$50 and left out everything below that value. I also let my wife know that if an item is not on an inventory sheet, it is of minimal value.

Update the File

When you acquire a new piece of equipment, don’t put off writing up an inventory page for it. You should also

Not Only for Ham Gear

There is no reason that this idea has to be limited to your ham gear. Many other hobbies, like model railroading for instance, include equipment or materials that may be difficult to value for the average person. Inventorying other specialized valuables in the manner described here could save your loved one a lot of work.

update the file every 6 months, in case you find something that you had forgotten to add, or you may have sold something and not remembered to take its sheet out of the file.

When your inventory is complete, take the time to go over it with your family. Show them what has been done and have them look it over. Confirm that everything on the sheets is clear to them, and make sure you show them where the file will be kept.

Conclusion

This is certainly not the only thing you should be doing to make things easier for your family in the event of your passing, but that is well beyond the scope of this article. This is just one thing that you can do to make things a bit easier, and hopefully allow your spouse to get a reasonable value out of your equipment.

Noel Beardsley, K8NB, was first licensed as WD8DON in 1976. Noel has spent the last 40 years in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan working in various communications roles. He is currently employed by a major telephone company. Noel enjoys restoring old radios as well as collecting keys and bugs. He can often be found on CW around the SKCC frequencies, mostly on 40 meters. Noel can be reached at k8nb@arrl.net.

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