

Legal Information regarding Broadband-Hamnet™

Written by Glenn Currie, KD5MFW

Saturday, 29 December 2012 08:44 - Last Updated Monday, 05 August 2013 15:36

Broadband-Hamnet™ is intended for amateur radio use and passing amateur radio traffic. It is NOT intended to replace your personal Internet connection. It is a “feature” that Broadband-Hamnet™ can be connected to the Internet. General Internet access is not its primary purpose. Use your personal Internet connection under Part-15 FCC rules, to serve that purpose.

There are many ways to use Broadband-Hamnet™, in compliance with Amateur Radio Part-97 FCC rules - without connecting to the Internet. The system is designed to be a robust, stand alone wireless network - that CAN be connected to the Internet.

If an operator connects their mesh network to the Internet, here are some ways, under FCC Part-97 rules, that it can be used: Echolink, Winlink/RMS Packet, tunnel meshing, remote control of radios/equipment, video relay, VoIP connections, APRS.

The operator of a mesh node has to make an active software configuration selection to pass Internet traffic onto the mesh network. Providing an Internet link is NOT the default mode in the Broadband-Hamnet™ software. Additionally, the operator must attach a live Internet connection to the mesh node to pass Internet traffic.

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If an operator takes these multiple active steps to connect their radio to the Internet, then they will need to understand what traffic is being passed and that it is covered by their Amateur Radio license.

If they join a mesh that has Internet access, each radio operator should do what is needed to keep operations legal.

If you need help operating your radio correctly, others can try to help, but ultimately, it is your license and your responsibility to operate legally.

As with ANY piece of Ham radio gear, Broadband-Hamnet™ COULD be used illegally, and it is the control operator's duty to make sure it is being used in accordance with FCC Part-97 Amateur Radio rules.

This website is not in a position to offer any definitive legal advice. Only a duly appointed person, empowered to interpret the rules and regulations, can do that. That means that for

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most of us, our opinion has no legal standing – no more than any personal opinion on tax law.

Since we cannot offer any definitive legal advice, we wish to avoid the fruitless legal arguments that have raged in multiple ham radio forums, and only served to get people upset. To do so, would be to expend resources that cost real money, for no useful purpose.

The moderators and administrators of the website will limit non-productive lines of discussion, and/or may pull postings of such nature. Rulings made by a moderator/administrator of this website are final.