

## Some Tips for Buying Ham Radio Equipment on Ebay

1. Look for the items you want on eHam and qrz classifieds first. eBay is a sellers' market and bidding can drive prices higher than a reasonable classifieds seller might ask. Good deals are available on eHam and qrz. Rarely does eBay give you a "miracle deal."
2. When you join Ebay, use your "My eBay" page as your base of operations. After finding items you are interested in, select them for watching in My eBay and they will be listed there along with other summary information such as time remaining in the auction and the current high bid.
3. If you don't already have a PayPal account, open one. Become a verified PayPal user. Only use PayPal for payments on eBay. Other payment methods are more risky. Never use Western Union. By using Paypal, a seller automatically gets your address for shipping an item if you win an auction.
4. Make use of the Search facility to find items you are interested in. Remember to try alternative search keywords and maybe even common misspellings or misclassifications. For example, a speaker mic may be listed as a speaker microphone or mistakenly listed as just a microphone. Restrict your search to Consumer Electronics which contains Ham Radio as a sub-category.
5. Read an item's description very carefully. If it is sketchy, be careful. Does it state that the unit is working? Is it untested or described as "as is?" Don't assume the unit works. Note if it includes any accessories. For example, an old HT up for auction may not include an antenna or may not have a tone board for accessing repeaters. Often manuals aren't included. A sloppy, uninformative description can be a red flag. However, if someone is selling a dead parent's equipment, they may not know much about the equipment, let alone be able to test whether or not it is working properly.
6. Inspect the pictures carefully. If there is only a stock manufacturer's photo or no photo, beware. Look for signs of hard use or damage. At least one of the photos should show all included accessories.
7. If you have specific questions on the item not covered in the description, you can send the seller a question via My Messages. Generally, sellers prefer to use this message system built into eBay. Again, don't ask questions covered in the item description.
8. If the item is a radio or major accessory, go to eHam and the ARRL Members Only website to read reviews of the item and determine if it has all the features you require.
9. Check the seller's rating. It should be at least 98%. Read other buyer's feedback on the seller. If there are many negative ratings, beware.
10. Check the listed shipping cost and the location of the item. Generally, the shipping costs are non-negotiable. These can add significantly to your total cost, especially for inexpensive items. Also check the seller's return policy.
11. Think ahead of time on how much the item is worth to you. Bidding can get out of hand and one can end up paying more than what a new equivalent item costs. Stick to your maximum and avoid getting emotionally involved in the bidding.

12. Be a bidding sniper. Don't bid on an item until the final minute or half minute. When you set a maximum bid on eBay, the system will automatically bid up to your maximum for you. But it is also doing this for others. The less time you are in the bidding, the more likely you will get the last bid in. People who bid on an item days or hours ahead of the end of the auction only serve to drive up the price.
13. Realize that if you win a auction, you are obligated to buy the item. Don't bid on something unless you can pay for it. If you back out, it is considered a breach of contract. If you do this much, you will be kicked off eBay.
14. If you win an item, pay immediately via PayPal. Then send the seller a message via My Messages stating that you have paid and thanking them for putting the item up for sale. If you have any questions about shipping or the item you won, you can put them in this message, as well. Such a message isn't required, but this both alerts the seller to your quick payment and puts them in the mood to give you a positive buyer rating. Buyers receive ratings from sellers, and fast payment makes them very happy. Your rating as a buyer is a mark of your integrity.
15. After you receive the item and you are satisfied with the transaction, be sure to leave positive feedback for the seller such as "Goods as advertised, timely delivery." You may also want to send them a message via My Messages that the item has arrived safely. If there is a problem, send the seller a message and try to resolve it amicably. Do not leave a negative rating for a seller unless there is clearly intentional fraud.
16. If buying an older HT, expect the battery packs to be dead on arrival. You will either have to buy new packs or have the old packs rebuilt. Also, some older radios have internal memory backup batteries (lithium button cells) that may be old or dead. These will need to be replaced.
17. Be ready to clean the radio with Armor All Protectant (plastic and rubber) and Flitz Polish (metal). Most items will be dirty when they arrive.