

Sounding Off about SINGARS

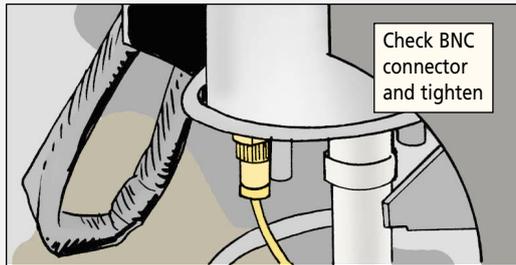
Dear Editor,

A SINGARS is made to operate up to 25 miles (or more) at 50 watts, but many of them can't communicate beyond a handful of miles.

Some of that loss comes from terrain or buildings in the signal path or weather, but a lot of it comes from poorly maintained cables and antennas.

The RF cable that runs from your antenna to your RT takes quite a beating. It's exposed to flying mud, rocks, sticks and other debris. In addition, this cable is asked to handle all types of weather. It's a protected cable, but it really wasn't designed to handle the weather and the beating it takes.

This abuse drastically degrades the cable's electrical performance. A new cable should have less than one watt of loss. Some "in use" cables that we tested had eight watts of loss or more!



Also, the BNC connector used on these cables is not the best for providing good metal-to-metal contact. Vibration can loosen it, so check it often.

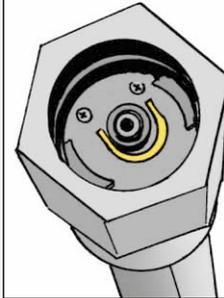
If your RT is not performing as it should, make the RF cable one of your first checks.

Of course, the antenna itself could be the culprit. Dirt, metal oxides and other contaminants can really degrade your antenna. So can a pound of silicone grease applied where only a trace is needed! Keep antennas clean and test them often to make sure they are reliable.

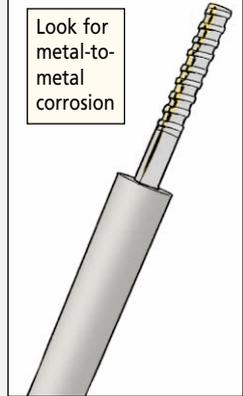
Good cables and a good antenna will go a long way toward having long way conversations.

CW4 Ron Nidiffer
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Ft Riley, KS

Dirt can degrade your antenna



Look for metal-to-metal corrosion



(Editor's note: CW4 Nidiffer has been in the radio business since 1967 and he knows his stuff! We can only add you need to get out of the motor pool and give yourself some distance to do a radio test. In the motor pool, if you up the power enough, you almost always can get a good check. But with a 20-mile separation out in the boonies, you'll know whether your radio is good to go or not.)



GOOD CABLES AND A GOOD ANTENNA MEAN GOOD COMM!

