

Odd Radio Reception

By: Kurt R Rudolph, KD7JYK

Odd lack of radio reception of the AM, and FM broadcast bands, 530 kHz – 1710 kHz, and 88 MHz – 108 MHz, in the United States, May, June, 2021.

I was speaking with a woman that lives in the town where I grew up, in a typical residential neighborhood near Pasadena, California. She spends many hours sitting on the front porch of her house, often listening to local radio broadcasts, from as early as 5 AM to 7:30 PM in the evening, daily, aside from times when she is walking her dog.

In the month of May, 2021, exact dates unknown, for a period of three to four days, her portable radio ceased to receive any signals in the AM, or FM broadcast bands. As this was an older radio, she assumed it quit functioning for reasons unknown, and mentioned this to a neighbor, who then purchased for her a replacement radio. When the new radio arrived, it worked as expected across both bands.

Beginning around June 1st, or 2nd, the replacement radio ceased receiving any signals, in either band. Assuming she had mistakenly used old batteries, she replaced them, the radio still unable to receive any stations in either band. All that could be heard was a faint hissing sound at low volume, and louder hissing sound at higher volume. The hissing, and lack of signals did not change when each band was tuned repeatedly from end to end. There was no indication of any broadcast signals, nothing trying to “come through” faintly in the background.

Thinking this was odd, she brought out another radio she owned, placed new batteries into it, with the exact same results, no stations heard across either band, and only a slight hissing sound that increased with volume.

As it happens, the woman has yet another battery operated radio. She put new batteries into the this radio, with the same results as the prior two radios. No signals were heard across both bands, a hissing sound could be heard, which increased with volume.

All three radios were portable, and battery operated, all were in use on the front porch of the woman’s house.

The woman then went into the house, to test reception on an AC mains powered radio in her kitchen, a distance of roughly ten meters from the porch, on the same floor of a wooden house built in the early 1920’s, with no other electronic devices other than a television, and landline telephone. That radio worked flawlessly across each band, and received all broadcasts, as it should.

One could assume, that by coincidence, all “new” batteries were in fact old, and dead, or dying. However, by roughly the end of the second week of June, all three battery operated radios, which had been set aside, began working as expected, with the same batteries that were in them the prior weeks. She has since tested each radio daily with the same batteries, with no issues, all work properly.

The portable radios are as follows:

Emerson P3809CS
Radio Shack 12-464
Powerbear PB-PR-01

The mains powered radio in the home, is a Sony CFDS70.



Emerson P3809CS

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It is now coming to the end of the second week of July, 2021. No other issues in reception have been noted on any of the radios, which have been checked daily.

In my years of growing up in the same town, on the same street, and playing radio from longwave, to microwave, I did not knowingly experience such issues from 1977, to 1998. I have not been in that town since 2010, and at that time operated Amateur radio from 160m to 440 MHz without issue, or anything unusual noted.

Additionally, I am in several forums, and social media groups for the community, as well as the street the woman lives on, and I am in contact with many dozens of her neighbors, and hundreds of other people throughout town, with messages received daily. No other persons have mentioned such an issue, which suggests there is not an interfering signal in the neighborhood, it appears to have been isolated, perhaps to only a few meters around her front porch, and not extending into the home.

73 de KD7JYK

Note from VA3ZNW: You may found more about mysterious propagation at **Antentop magazine:**

http://www.antentop.org/book/c_propagation_mysterious.htm

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Powerbear PB-PR-01



Sony CFDS70.