

Suggestions for New Pro-97 Users

These are basic suggestions and instructions for those folks that are either new to scanning or new to the Radio Shack Pro-97. They are not intended to be the end-all or be-all of instructions and you may or may not follow the suggestions and information provided. It is the research and trial and error of many who have gone before you. There may be a few mistakes or a bit of mis-information, but either way, it is not intentional nor are there any underlying motives in providing this information.

First and foremost....Check the Files Section of the Pro-97 Yahoo Group Web page to see if your question can be answered there. Second, check the past Messages of the Group, chances are very good that you will find an answer there. Another suggestion would be to do Searches on Google, Yahoo or your favorite Web Search Engine.

The RS Pro-97 Manual

Yes, it is confusing and not well written nor does it provide much positive information for the lay-person to be able to program trunked radio systems into the 10 banks. One recommendation is that you download the .pdf file of the manual from the Radio Shack website. Or you may find the Manual in .pdf format here in the same Files Section that you downloaded this Help Guide. That way you have a significant way to search the manual with the use of the Adobe Reader program, which is also available free on the web.

Keep in mind that you have 10 Banks (0 thru 9) with 100 Channels in each Bank. You can program Trunked Systems with non-trunked frequencies but you must program certain trunked systems first in the Bank or the 97 will not scan correctly. In most cases you can program 2 or more trunked systems on one Bank but you will probably not scan any one trunked system effectively, this is especially so if you are in an urban setting with a number of different agencies using different trunked systems. It is usually better to program one 'busy' trunked system per Bank

Protective Cases. There are a number of protective cases for your Pro-97. Some are using nylon, leather and other types of cases. Some cases were originally designed to be used for handy-talkies or walkie-talkies or portables, others were designed to be used for other radios and some older cell phones. A search of the Past Messages can provide some insight as to what cases are available for purchase....on-line and otherwise. One Supplier that has been used with success is Lilkase.com. Reports have recently come in that LilKase is out of business. The price is \$19.95 with about \$6 shipping & handling. At this time, there are no reported issues with the LilKase except that there is a small problem with the scanner being able to stand-up freely when using the case. A possible solution would be to get a brochure or leaning picture stand to hold the scanner. An office supply (like OfficeMax or Office Depot) should have a brochure holder. One member reports that Dollar General has a \$2 picture holder that you can remove the glass and the scanner fits perfectly. A search of Ebay or Yahoo may provide less expensive cases. Keep in mind that electronics do not like to be left in extreme heat or extreme cold. The first thing that could be affected by exposure to heat or cold is the LCD. It can be replaced but might be better left for an expert to perform the operation.

If you don't use a case, I recommend that you get a clear plastic screen protector like those used to protect the LCD on Digital Cameras or PDAs. Cut the rectangle slightly larger than the LCD screen of your Pro-97.

Website for Lilkase: www.lilkase.com

The Knobs. The Pro-97 incorporates a single post to mount the Volume and Squelch Controls. For many folks (especially those of us with fat fingers) it is hard to adjust the Volume without moving the Squelch knob at the same time. One suggestion is to slightly pry the Volume knob up away from the Squelch knob. Be careful not to loosen the knob too much and it falls off and you lose the darn thing and have to order a new knob. Some folks have found that using the Pro-2055 Knobs works better than the 97 Knobs. These Knobs can be ordered thru Radio Shack as well. Do a Message Search in this Group to find the Reference Numbers.

Another suggestion for the knobs is to order replacement knobs. There are two Kenwood knobs available that fit perfectly on the single stem. These two knobs are relatively inexpensive, but the shipping & handling may be more than you want to pay. Many of those in the Yahoo Group have ordered these replacement knobs from Pacific Parts, but this is not the only supplier of these knobs. You should research on the net for other electronic parts houses if you don't want to use Pac Parts.

The info for the Kenwood knobs are as follows

K29-5150-03

K29-5159-03

Website for Pacific Parts: www.pacparts.com

Choose either the Consumer (for individuals) or Business (if you are part of a company that wants to order) and enter the part numbers and fill out the order form as required. You may get a notice from PacParts that says the knobs are on Back-order, but most of the Members on the Yahoo Group got theirs in about 10 days. For me, the knobs cost less than \$2 for both and the shipping & handling was reduced to \$3, but there is nothing on the PacParts website that says that they will continue to reduce the S/H.

The Standard Antenna. The RS Antenna is a generic supplied antenna and does an adequate job for many people, but if you are interested in scanning trunked systems then you might want to upgrade to a specific 800 mhz Antenna. RS sells one for \$16.99. The RS Catalog # is 20-283. If your local store doesn't have it, ask them to order it and have it sent to your home. If you talk to them nice they will probably eliminate the shipping & handling charges. There are several other Members that recommend other Antennas. The best thing to do is search the past Messages for "Antennas" and see what everyone has talked about

before. Keep in mind that the Antenna works better or worse depending on a number of factors including the terrain, urban vs. suburban vs. rural, type of system and your particular location. What works fine for one person may not work well with another using the same scanner, programming, etc. You'll have to experiment if you are having reception problems.

The Programming Cable. Yes, it is possible to program your Pro-97 using your computer and a particular cable. The cable and cd-rom that the RS website recommends (at the time of the writing > 12-19-2005) is incorrect. This cable and cd-rom is about \$5, and will probably be recommended by unknowing or profit-minded RS employees. But you will not be able to program the Pro-97 with it. You need the Gray Cable, RS SKU 20-289, and the price is about \$24. Again, if your local RS is out of this cable, ask them to order for you and also ask them to eliminate the shipping & handling. Most RS employees will be glad to do so. If an employee doesn't understand, get with the manager or go to a different RS. You can also find this cable a little less expensive but with added shipping & handling charges on www.greamerica.com.

It seems that Radio Shack is now selling a USB Cable that will work with the Pro-97, and it has a version of Scan Cat Lite that goes with the Cable. I still recommend & use the gray cable and Win97.

What Program To Use. Many Members of this Group are using Win97 to program their Pro-97. It is a very good program and fairly easy to use. It works in conjunction with another website but you don't have to use the other website if you don't want to. Win97 is available for download and a 30 day free trial. To use Win97 after the 30 days, it will cost you. Most of the Members think the price is well-worth it for the ease of use alone. But it is up to you whether you want to use it or not. No one will pressure you to do so. There is another program called ScanCat-Lite. There have been different discussions with which program is the better. The obvious solution is to try both programs and see which one is easiest for YOU to use. I, personally, have not used ScanCat-Lite, so I cannot verify as to the ease of use with ScanCat-Lite

Win97 is available from: www.starrsoft.com

ScanCat-Lite is available from: www.scancat.com

Where do I find frequencies for my area?

There are a number of sources for the various frequencies available to program into your Pro-97. The first one that I recommend is Radio Reference. You can research all information (particularly trunked systems) in all 50 states. If you become a Donating Member of RadioReference, you will be allowed to download the frequencies/talk-groups/etc into the Win97 program. This alone makes it very easy to program your Pro-97 to scan the frequencies that you want to listen to. Many Members have used Win97 and RadioReference and have programmed their Pro-97 without ever understanding the instructions from the manual and are happily scanning what they want to listen to. You may also log onto CityFreqs.com to see other frequencies for your city/town. Note: some of the listed info is dated. I also recommend that you do searches for Scan Groups in your area....city....county....state. You may find a local Scan Group that has a great deal of information that you will be able to use. There are also some publications out that may give you a number of freqs. to program. Also check

the Files Section of this Group's website for possible Win.97 files for your area to use with the Win97 program. If you check some of the websites listed below, you should also check any LINKS section that the site may offer.

Some popular Websites:

www.radioreference.com
www.cityfreq.com
www.scanatlanta.com
www.milaircomms.com
www.marksscanners.bravehost.com
www.scannerstuff.com
www.trunkscanner.com

Power Supply (Batteries and Adapters)

There are two battery holders supplied with the Pro-97, Yellow & Dark Blue/Black. The Yellow is for Rechargeable Batteries and the other is for Alkaline Batteries. A number of Members report that they use a variety of different brand Rechargeable Batteries and all get good use. Some of the most popular are the Energizer AA with 2300 mA. But keep in mind that the manual advises using a less powerful RC Battery. This is presumably because the manual was originally printed when a less powerful RC Battery was available. It is also good to keep in mind that if you use a more powerful RC Battery, you may void any warranty from RS if something happens to your 97.

The proper Radio Shack AC Adapter is Model # 273-1769, it is a 9 volt 300mA, and requires the C Plug (Model # 273-1706) to work with the Pro-97. Be sure when you put the C Plug into the Adapter wire that you put the positive (+) in the end marked TIP. If you don't you will probably ruin your Scanner and possibly void the warranty. The current list price for the Adapter is \$14.99, and the C Plug is free with purchase of the Adapter. If you already have the Adapter with a different plug, then the C Plug will cost you about \$5.

This is Important. Some Members have reported problems including Overheating and Melting of Plastic parts of the 97 when using Rechargeable Batteries while also hooking up the AC Power Adapter. It is highly recommended that you do not try to charge your RC Batteries using the 97 while having the AC Adapter operating the Scanner.

The manual also states that you should only use Alkaline Batteries or Nickel-Metal Hydride Rechargeable Batteries.

You may use Rechargeable Batteries in the Dark Battery Holder, just don't try to Recharge any Batteries in the Dark Holder.

Re-Banding & Digital Changes.

Some of the Members have expressed questions regarding Re-banding and going Digital. The Pro-97 may be affected by the Re-banding of many Motorola trunked systems. It is unknown at this time what will happen with any scanner once the Re-banding has taken place. It is possible that RS will (for a fee) replace the

electronic board to monitor the Re-banded freqs. But there is no guarantee that they will do so. They have done this with another scanner in the past. The fee at that time was about \$40. Keep in mind that EDACS and LTR systems should not be affected and if those systems are in your area, then you should not have to worry about Re-banding. If a local system goes Digital as in the APCO-25 or similar type, the Pro-97 will NOT scan those systems. You will need to purchase another scanner in order to listen to those systems. There are several recommendations for which scanners to consider, but since this is a Pro-97 Group, I have not posted them here. Chances are you can search the Past Messages and find many references to Digital Scanners.

These recommendations are what have worked for many Members of the Yahoo Pro-97 Group. I have mentioned several businesses and websites in this document, nothing should be construed as an endorsement of any website or business or product. I have not sought nor received any benefit for posting any business, website or product, other than what I've purchased for my own use.

If you find a mistake or bad link or any mis-information, please feel free to contact the Member who created it. ((Please, NO SPAM))

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Thank you and I hope you find this very informative.

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