

Tac-Comm TRC-1 Tactical Radio Carrier

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When asked if I wanted to review Tac-Comm's tactical radio carrier, the TRC-1, I jumped at the opportunity to evaluate a potential solution for disaster and emergency response communications. I was not disappointed. Upon the carrier's arrival, I immediately mounted my Icom IC-2200H bracket and radio on the optional Top Cover, a 0.060-inch-thick steel plate that screws onto the top of the basic carrier, and then slipped my Astron SS-30 switching power supply under the top cover and into the carrier. With this basic configuration (see Figure 16), I was on the air and checked into my local ARES® net as I rode out Hurricane Matthew last October at my home in Daytona Beach.

Later, I purchased the optional, high-quality straps/buckles (set of two), slipped them through the slots on the bottom of the carrier, and snugged them up around my SS-30, rendering it secure inside the carrier without the messy drilling of holes in the unit to screw it down. Slippage was very minimal. I was able to pick up the whole carrier with my radio mounted on top and power supply secured inside it, and carry it around by its heavy-duty tubular nylon webbing handle. Loved it!

The basic carrier is made from 0.090-inch-thick aluminum with a durable powder-coat finish. It has collapsible steel side rails that adjust for height by loosening screws, sliding the sides up or down, and then retightening the screws. The idea is to protect, orga-



Figure 16 — The author's IC-2200H transceiver and Astron SS-30 power supply mounted on the TRC-1 carrier with optional top cover.

nize, transport, and use your radio and peripherals in potentially demanding field locations.

The TRC-1 carrier includes a tilt bail, and holes punched at the four top corners will accept the rubber feet of another TRC-1 for stacking. The internal (fully opened) dimensions are 4.8 inches high, 7.5 inches wide, and 10.5 inches deep. With the adjustable side rails, the internal height can be reduced to 2.5 inches, perfect for my SS-30, which fit like a glove.

The optional top cover is secured to the top of the carrier with eight matching black pan-head screws, which are provided. Slots provide for ventilation, mounting of speakers, lights, radios (which is what I mounted on it), and virtually any other small peripheral imaginable (a TNC, for example).

Bottom Line

The Tactical Radio Carrier system offers a variety of options for packaging transceivers and accessories for transportation and use in the field.

Another option is the HTH-1 handheld radio holder/front cover, which mounts to the top cover by loosening two of the top cover screws, positioning it using the holes, and then sliding it into place (see Figure 17). With the slots, the position is adjustable. The functions of this bracket are two-fold. First, as its name suggests, the bracket can be installed in the upright L position so that the belt clip of a handheld transceiver slips easily over the vertical part of the bracket to provide a secure

position. That allows for single-hand operation when using a speaker/mic, which can also slide onto the bracket when not in use. The bracket helps prevent the handheld radio from being knocked over. Secondly, the bracket can serve as a front cover when mounted with the vertical part of the L directed downward across the front opening of the carrier for extra protection of the enclosed equipment during transit.

All of the above worked very well in my experience. I even purchased another carrier and top cover, drilled a 5/8-inch hole in the middle of the top cover, and mounted an NMO mount for my Motorola-style whip antenna/coil, as shown in Figure 18. That worked well, too, although it's advised to keep the unit/antenna away from the operator or other people. Another elegant solution, at least as I saw it.

For my personal, more permanent application of the TRC-1, I ended up removing the top cover and tilt bail, then installing the straps through the slots on the bottom of the tray, screwing the unit down to one of the decks on my

mini scaffolding, and then enclosing my SS-30 in it so that it could not be bumped off to hit the ground. I routed the dc power cord through the straps, securing them, and helping reduce the risk of having the leads inadvertently pulled out from the power supply's screw-down output posts. (I wish Astron put Powerpole connectors on their power supplies. They would provide much more security and utility in the standard ARES/RACES dc power connector configuration. The screw-down posts drive me crazy. But, that's another story.)

The unit's adaptability and functionality are almost limitless — many examples of configurations are given on the product website, from mounting multiple radios, to TNCs, power supplies, and even batteries (using the straps). I liked the product, and I bought one for my own deployable station, the ultimate litmus test for any review item. The unit's utility and function is only matched by the fun it is to try new configurations and putting together a neat, secure, organized package easily transportable in a go-kit,



Figure 17 — The optional HTH-1 bracket can be used to secure handheld radios in an upright position atop the TRC-1. The bracket can also be mounted in the other direction, providing a front cover to protect equipment inside the TRC-1 during transit.



Figure 18 — The author mounted a 2-meter antenna using another TRC-1 and top cover.

which protects your expensive gear.

Manufacturer: Tac-Comm, 1050 W. 105 N., Orem, UT 84057; tel 801-769-6154; www.tac-comm.com. Price:

TRC-1 Carrier (with tilt bail and black screws), \$59.95; top cover, \$14.95; HTH-1 handheld holder/front cover, \$11.95; straps with buckles, \$4.50 a pair.