

Retevis RT3S – Review by KI5PG

August 4, 2020

Arrived: July 27, 2020

Purchased from eBay: [retevisflagstore](#)

Purchase price: \$83.99 plus sales, tax \$6.93 – total \$90.92,

Free shipping from Chino, CA - Priority 3 day delivery USPS

How do you review a radio that ultimately you could not get to work properly?

The programming cable was not included inside the box but it was included in a soft envelope under the USPS shipping label. Don't just toss out the outer shipping wrap.

This VHF/UHF Analog/DMR radio is similar in size to the Radioddity GD-77. It uses the same antenna as the GD-77. It comes with a written manual, entirely in English, 87 pages in length. The manual appears to be thorough. There is one separate page of instructions for the GPS operation.

Like many Chinese radios, the Retevis RT3S, needed a firmware upgrade as soon as it arrived. This is where the problems began. Apparently each time the firmware is updated the programming software must be updated as well. Retevis does not provide clear step by step instructions for installing the programming cable driver, updating the firmware, and installing the programming software. Although I was able to muddle through process on the limited instructions provided, ultimately I had continuing programming problems that I could not overcome.

The programming cable driver, the firmware, and the CPS (Customer programming software) are provided as archive files that must be downloaded, unzipped, and installed on your Windows PC. The files are not clearly explained. You can't tell which application file to run for set-up. You basically have to hunt and peck through the software and hope you are using the right files and programs.

I upgraded the firmware, or at least, I think I upgraded the firmware. After uploading the firmware the software gave me a "success" response. But when I tried to program the radio I could not get the radio to respond in the manner it was programmed. The channels would not work properly and the radio would not respond to changes in settings properly. After about two days of frustrations I began to suspect either a bad firmware update or a bad programming cable. So I re-installed the firmware update. I noticed that some settings which were not responding earlier began to respond properly now. So I was encouraged that I had found the problem. But my encouragement was short lived when other problems arose and the radio still would not function according to the way the channels were set up. I even went as far as uploading some sample code plugs found on the net.

After about 4-5 days of struggling I decided I could not get the Retevis RT3S to operate properly. I notified the seller of the problems I was experiencing and indicated that I wanted to return the radio. The seller did not ask any questions and was surprisingly eager to accept back the radio, even reimbursing me for return shipping! No sooner than I notified the seller that the radio was shipped back, the seller refunded my money before the radio was received back. I've never had that happen when returning an item on eBay.

I spoke with Bill Cordell, K5VOM. He mentioned that he had a problem with one Retevis radio but he also had another Retevis DMR radio that he liked very much.

I can't honestly believe that all Retevis RT3S radios are bad. I think I just had a problem with this one radio. The problem I experienced was most likely due to a faulty firmware update. But I do fault Retevis for not providing clearer instructions for which files to use when installing the driver, updating the firmware, and installing the CPS.

I think the RT3S radio was well built. I believe it has good promise, but ultimately I must rate it a failure because of the problems I experienced.

Is it fair to fail a radio when the problems may be caused by the user?

