

Note: Shortwave is of no use in a local emergency. Best sources are AM, NOAA, TV, and finally FM.

etón

FR300
AM-FM-WX

Their Home Page

www.etoncorp.com

Crank It Up !!



The "Grundig" name is not badged on this iteration of Eton FR's. The FR 300 is an Emergency Radio with ample sound dimension for a toss out radio, though it has no tone control. At \$50 bucks you may want to keep it around for a while.

Strongly resembling the Grundig S350 field radio in its visual layout, the knobs are easy to turn. The ergonomics are straight forward and convenient. The FR 250, Eton's shortwave twin, does not have the weather alert feature, nor the TV sound reception. The operating frequencies of the FR 300 are AM 525 to 1710 KHz, FM 88 to 108 MHz, TV Vhf channels 2 through 13, and the 7 position WX selector switch in the form of the big round knob on the radio's face. A horizontal slider switch under the scale selects among the different functions. I found the AM band to be surprisingly sensitive. The analogue tuning knob on the side has a fine tuner stacked from its center. The FM band is crowded, and I found the fine tuner to be necessary to receive the NPR station I usually listen to. TV band 1 is also grouped with FM. Those represent TV channels 2 - 6. They take some patience to tune, but the reception is adequate. TV 2 has its own function selection, and occupies the entire width of the scale. WX is not present on the scale and instead is controlled by the big round knob with 7 selection positions to cover the 162.5 frequency. The WX band was tested 45 miles from Nashville. The Nashville transmitter was received along with the strong signal



from our local transmitter. Interestingly, the radio also has an alert feature which activates by a signal from NOAA! Cool beans!

A cluster of 3 LED's comprises the lamp located to the left of the scale. Two provide a modicum of light which can allow one to see to get about in a small room. The third is a strobing red lamp, and is highly visible. This could be of benefit along the side of a road during a breakdown.

Another gadget is the included siren, useful for driving one's parents to distraction. Classify along with the strobe light as gimmicky.

Additionally, the radio comes with a carry pouch, instructions booklet, Eton/Grundig pocket catalogue, and an assortment of adapters for inserting into a myriad of cell phone connections. Eton states that the hand crank can charge up cell phones, at a "vigorous" cranking rate of 2 turns per second. The length of time it takes to charge up a phone battery is as long as is a piece of string.



I have purchased FR 200's as potentially useful gifts. The band spread on the 200's is adequate. AM band on the 300 is nearly identical in its feel and capture of signal. I have preferred to power those radios with 3 AA's, and that option exists for the FR 300 as well, or an optional AC power pack, or nothing at all but the crank (even without the included nickel-metal hydride battery pack). A suitable and optional AC adapter will maintain the charge on the battery pack, plus allow continuous monitoring of the weather alert mode. All said, this is a pleasant sounding radio to have in a pinch, like say the Ohio Valley ice storm of December 2004?