

“Basic operating procedures for drills and actual emergencies”

If there is a net control, that station will be in charge of routing all communications. Pay attention to what net control says, be ready to act on requests quickly, and refrain from transmitting unless called or you have new traffic to contribute. Do not leave the net without informing net control! If net control requests that you switch to a different frequency to pass traffic, return to net as soon as that traffic is passed and notify net control that you have returned. Do not contact another station directly without instructions from net control.

If there is no net control, and you are familiar with how to run a net, please take charge and become net control. If you are net control and you need to take a break, be sure someone else is available to take over before leaving.

Listen to the operation of the net before jumping in. Try to determine who is net control, what the overall situation is and who, if any, are the key players in the event at hand. Be sure you have something to contribute before breaking in. If the net control wishes to know who is available but not presently involved in the actual activity, he or she will ask for check ins this is the time to make your presence known.

Remember! We are here to assist the various public officials (police, fire, disaster managers, or whoever else is in overall charge) we are NOT here to take action independently. This means you should use common sense and your experience to expedite traffic but you must not second guess the person in charge and start dispatching people, equipment, and materials, or otherwise performing tasks that are not communications in nature unless of course that is also your official job for that situation. How you get the message passed is to a large extent up to you and your individual initiative. The person coordinating the event does not care how you get your part of the job done, as long as it gets done promptly, smoothly and professionally. Amateur radio is here to serve others, not to become the “Star” of the show. Our job is best done when public officials realize they can rely on us “to get it done” while they worry about other more important things.

The operation may use tactical or standard amateur call signs, or (as is usually the case) a mix of both. If tactical call signs are used, you will be given an opportunity from time to time to identify your station. Do not transmit your ID unless requested, except when responding to a query. If

called, give your ID once when answering the initial call, and not again until you are called with a different query or you are initiating a call to respond to a previous query. Over identification is a waste time and interferes with other users when traffic is heavy. Do not use phonetics unless requested by either net control or the station(s) you are in contact with. Only when there are two or more stations (active at the same time) with very similar sounding calls should phonetics be used frequently and even then partial phonetics are usually sufficient. Example: K1 Golf Alpha X-ray instead of Kilo One Golf Alpha X-ray.

Speak clearly and slowly when relaying critical traffic. Saying something once clearly is better than having to repeat several times. If phonetics is required, know and use the standard ARRL/ITU phonetic alphabet. “Home-made” or “cute” phonetics have no place during emergencies and only delay and confuse messages and other traffic.

Respond promptly when called! You should try to respond within 1 or 2 seconds when called. Long delays confuse the operation and slow traffic. If you are net control, it is your responsibility to keep traffic moving smoothly and to help less experienced operators as needed. Firm control of a net will result in fewer repeats and delays. Give short summaries of what is happening as time permits. This helps new arrivals, and keeps everyone focused on the event at hand.