

TACTICAL CALLS – WHEN AND HOW TO USE THEM

Tactical calls are used to identify a location during an event regardless of who is operating. This is an important concept. The tactical call allows you to contact a location without knowing the FCC call of ANY operator at that location. It also eliminates confusion at shift changes and when a person takes a break from operating.

Think about that. Do you answer a call from the sound of a person's voice or from the identified location? The answer is obvious: from the identified location.

Tactical calls should be used for all Emergency nets, once there are more than three participants, and most public service nets, if there is more than minimal traffic.

Use your assigned SKYWARN identification number (if you have one) when checking into a SKYWARN Net. For example: "CLA 8" followed by any report for the NCS.

Net Control will assign the tactical call as each location is opened. It will normally be some unique identifier that indicates which location or function this is. Some examples are:

- NET – for Net Control
- CHECK POINT-1 – for the first check point in a public service event
- CP – for the Event or Incident Command Post (ECP or ICP)
- FIRE-BASE-1 – for the first firebase established or the firebase in a particular region
- SHELTER 5 – For Public Shelter #5 on the country's list of shelters
- EMS – for the operator stationed with the EMS vehicle or
- AID-3 – for the third aid station on a route, etc.

Specifically for SPECIAL EVENTS the following Tactical Calls can/will be used:

- NET CONTROL
- REST 1 – for Rest Stop 1
- REST 2 – for Rest Stop 2
- REST 3 – for Rest Stop 3
- TURNAROUND – for the Course Turnaround point
- BICYCLE 1 – for a communicator using his Bicycle to traverse the course
- BICYCLE 2
- MOTORCYCLE
- EMS
- START – Who calls the Start of the Race
- FINISH – For the Start communicator who then becomes the Finish Line communicator
- MILE 1 – for communicators stationed in intermediate spots between the Rest Stops
- MILE 2
- MILE 3
- Maybe SHADOW 1 – for the Course Director Shadow

Proper use of tactical calls can best be explained by example:

1. INITIATING A CALL

1.1. If you were at aid station three during a directed net and wanted to contact Net Control you would say "NET, AID3" or, in crisper nets, simply "AID3". If you had emergency traffic you would say "AID3, emergency traffic" or for priority traffic "AID3, priority traffic".

1.2. Notice how you have conveyed all necessary information without using any unnecessary word or time. If you had traffic for another location, such as checkpoint five, you would say "AID3, traffic for CHECK POINT 5". This tells NCS everything needed to handle the traffic. NCS will then call checkpoint 5 with "CHECK POINT 5, call AID3 for traffic", if there is no other traffic holding. (Thus, there is no need to ask Net Control for permission to go direct with Check Point 5.) Notice that there has been no FCC issued calls used. At this point none are necessary.

2. TRAFFIC DURING A CALL

2.1. Tactical calls will normally not be used in the contact unless a separate location is mentioned in the message.

3. COMPLETING A CALL

3.1. To complete the call from AID3, after the message/traffic is complete you would say "(your call), AID3". This fulfills your identification requirements and tells NCS that you believe the call to be complete.

3.2. If the Net Control Station believes the exchange to be complete, and the member station has not identified. Then the NCS should say, (completing this example) "EMS, do you have further traffic?" At that point EMS should either finish with the traffic or identify and clear.

4. THE LEGAL STUFF: (Part 97)

4.1. Legal requirements, within nets, are those of identification and operation on frequencies within the Amateur Radio Bands. The FCC tells us that you MUST identify at ten-minute intervals during a conversation and in your last transmission. During periods of heavy activity in event nets it is easy to forget when you last identified.

4.2. The easiest way to insure you comply with FCC identification requirements during an event net is to identify with your FCC issued call as you complete an exchange.

4.3. This serves two functions:

- 1) Tells NCS you consider the exchange to be complete without having to use extra words (saves time)
- 2) Fulfills all FCC identification requirements.

5. DON'T OVER IDENTIFY

5.1. There is normally nothing that will expend more time, needlessly, than over identification. Someone that uses their FCC issued call in every transmission is usually a person that is unsure of themselves, or worse yet, someone that is more interested in having their call known to everyone at the event. In the latter situation, help them find work elsewhere.

5.2. The FCC tells us that you need only identify at ten-minute intervals during a conversation (NOT during a net unless you talk for more than ten minutes) and during your last transmission.

5.3. If you end EXCHANGE, not transmission, with your call, that tells everyone that you are of the opinion the exchange is complete and you fulfilled all FCC requirements.