

"Making Good Operating Procedures A Habit"

Let's face reality folks. When push comes to shove, and when the chips are down, the majority of emergency communications will be voice (radiotelephone). At least in the United States. 100 years ago it was *all* in Morse. Spark gap was the mode-o-day...then later CW dominated. That was all there was. If you weren't a Morse operator...you didn't communicate. 50 years ago a reasonable guess might be that it was 50% Morse and 50% AM 'phone. (some SSB maybe) and a little FM.

It makes no difference if your favorite mode is CW or digital, and that voice is the least efficient, the reality is that most EmComm is on voice...and will probably remain their for a long time. CW, digital, and other modes are more effective in many ways and still have their place, and can (and will) be used very effectively to *supplement* voice communications...in certain situations and for specific functions. However, the reality remains...like it or not...voice is where we are at.

We all learned to speak before we entered kindergarten. By the time we left grammar school, most of us could read and write fairly well. By the end of high school we all (should have at least) mastered basic verbal and written language skills. (While some of us had learned the Morse language by that time, many had not, and struggled to learn it later in life. Many hams learned just enough Morse to pass an exam...and unfortunately never or rarely use it.) SSB and FM prevail.

In all public service good communication skills are essential. But, unfortunately what we hear on the bands...is (usually) NOT a good example of effective communication skills. As EMCOMM operators, we must NOT allow ourselves to become mediocre (or worse) voice communicators. Sadly, many operators emulate what they hear on the air and assume that what they hear, by both newcomers and old timers, is proper. NOT!

So how does a skilled voice radio operator...operate?

A GOOD VOICE EMCOMM OPERATOR:

1. **ALWAYS** makes sure that his/her transceiver is properly adjusted. Mic gain level, on the proper frequency, not using excessive power, etc.

2. **ALWAYS** speaks clearly and succinctly...and not too fast.

3. Establishes two-way contact and obtains for a signal report before starting a transmission. (If you want a "radio check" take your radio to a repair shop.)

4. Avoids talking directly into a microphone. Rather talks "across the mic but close to it" and thus avoids plosive breath sounds or weak voice.
5. Knows and uses ITU Phonetics – not funny ones.
6. Uses **ROGER solely** to indicate that a transmission has been received and is understood. (ROGER is the voice equivalent of R in Morse.)
7. Does not use ROGER for "yes", "affirmative", or "I agree with you" and does not say: "That's a big ROGER" or some other similar slang term.
8. Says **AFFIRMATIVE** for "yes" and does not use it in place of ROGER. (They are not the same.)
9. Says **NEGATIVE** for "no". "Nega-tory" is not in his or her vocabulary.
10. Uses **SAY AGAIN** when they need something repeated. "Repeat" or "please repeat" may be confused with "received"
11. Says the call sign or tactical call sign of the station he or she is turning the contact over to followed by **OVER** or **GO AHEAD**. (Same as K or KN in Morse.)
12. **NEVER** "quick keys." On 'phone allow a pause of 0.5 to 1.0 seconds before PTT to let others break in, and then pause another 0.5 to 1.0 seconds before speaking. (To avoid cutting off the first letters or word of your transmission.)
13. Keeps transmissions reasonably short.
14. Pays attention and practices "TLC"..."(To Listen Carefully)".
15. Knows where he or she is located and knows how to effectively communicate that location to another station.
16. Says: "Say your location" or "What is your location?" Never: "What's your QTH?", "What's your 10-20", or (worse yet) "What's yer twenty?". (Note: Law enforcement uses the "10 code" and their own phonetics. Amateur, commercial, maritime, aeronautical and other operators use ITU standard prowords.)
17. Stays in a net (and pays attention) unless checked in and checked out.
18. Does not ask another operator to "check me in" (to a net) unless he/she is in **radio** contact with the relaying station during the net period. Telephone, email, Internet and other landline circuit relays are not radio...and do not count. Nor does: "Check me in to the net tonight. I'm going bowling." This puts the other operator on the spot and is useless.

19. **NEVER** whistles, says "hell - oh", or blows into a mic when transmitting over the air. (Use a dummy load instead.)

20. **NEVER** keys down on a frequency that is in use to adjust an antenna matching unit, and NEVER fails to identify when tuning up.

21. **NEVER** slurs his or her call sign when identifying in voice.

22. **NEVER** transmits using excessive power but uses enough power to ensure that communications is clearly received..

23. **ALWAYS** identifies at least every ten minutes during a communications session.

24. **ALWAYS** remains courteous and respectful of others on-the-air. (Even if the other operator is "a world class lid".)

Here are a few transmissions that have actually been monitored on-the-air...during EmComm nets:

(After "doubling" on a net control station.): "Net? Is there a net on? What time is it? What frequency am I on?"

(During a blizzard): "The Highway Patrol has closed the Interstate. But I can tell you a way to get around the road block." (This was told to a truck driver who took the operator's advice. Later his jack-knifed 18 wheeler blocked a secondary road for over 12 hours . Fortunately, no one was injured.)

"BREAK." (NCS): "Go ahead". "Is the club breakfast this Saturday or next?"

"W...as in...as in...as in...Juarez!"

"H...as in...José."

PLEASE DO NOT DO THESE AND OTHER STUPID THINGS! (UNLESS YOU WANT TO DISPLAY YOUR IGNORANCE AND LACK OF COURTESY!)

Adapted from Emcomm Monthly, April 2005

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