

## Tactical Call Signs

Tactical call signs can identify the station's location or its purpose during an event, regardless of who is operating the station. This is an important concept. The tactical call sign allows you to contact a station without knowing the FCC call sign of the operator. It virtually eliminates confusion at shift changes or at stations with multiple operators.

Tactical call signs should be used for all emergency nets and public service events if there are more than just a few participants.

If one does not already exist, the NCS may assign the tactical call sign as each location is "opened." Tactical call signs will usually provide some information about the location or its purpose. It is often helpful if the tactical call signs have a meaning that matches the way in which the served agency identifies the location or function. Some examples are:

"Net"--for net control station

"Springfield EOC"--for the city's Emergency Operations Center

"Firebase 1"--for the first fire base established, or a primary fire base

"Checkpoint 1"--for the first check point in a public service event

"Canyon Shelter"--for the Red Cross shelter at Canyon School

"Repair 1"--for the roving repair vehicle at a bike-a-thon

"Mercy"--for Mercy Hospital

### Calling with Tactical Call Signs

If you are at "Aid 3" during a directed net and want to contact the net control station, you would say "Net, Aid 3" or, in crisper nets (and where the NCS is paying close attention), simply "Aid 3." If you had emergency traffic, you would say "Aid 3, emergency traffic," or for priority traffic "Aid 3, priority traffic."

Notice how you have quickly conveyed all the information necessary, and have not used any extra words.

If you have traffic for a specific location, such as Firebase 5, you would say "Aid 3, priority traffic for Firebase 5." This tells the NCS everything needed to correctly direct the message. If there is no other traffic holding, the NCS will then call Firebase 5 with, "Firebase 5, call Aid 3 for priority traffic."

Note that no FCC call signs have been used so far. None are necessary when you are calling another station.

### Station Identification

In addition to satisfying the FCC's rules, proper station identification is essential to promoting the efficient operation of a net. The FCC requires that you identify at ten-minute intervals during a conversation and at the end of your last transmission. During periods of heavy activity in tactical nets it is easy to forget when you last identified, but if you identify at the end of each transmission, you will waste valuable time. What to do?

The easiest way to be sure you fulfill FCC station identification requirements during a net is to give your FCC call sign as you complete each *exchange*. Most exchanges will be far shorter than ten minutes. This serves two important functions:

1) It tells the NCS that you consider the exchange complete (and saves time and extra words)

2) It fulfills all FCC identification requirements.

### Completing a Call

After the message has been sent, you would complete the call from Aid 3 by saying "Aid 3, *<your call sign>*". This fulfills your station identification requirements and tells the NCS that you believe the exchange to be complete.

If the Net Control Station believes the exchange is complete, and Aid 3 had forgotten to identify, then the NCS should say, "Aid 3, do you have further traffic?" At that point, Aid 3 should either continue with the traffic, or "clear" by identifying as above.

For this method to work properly, the NCS must allow each station the opportunity to identify at the close of an exchange.