

Notes for the District 69 Emcoms Team Net  
Compiled from numerous resources by VA7ZA at shaw.ca

Operating Note #1, 2011

The following procedures are important for Amateur Radio Operators if they are going to be valuable during an emergency situation. Some also apply to everyday operating when we are just enjoying the hobby.

Operating a two way radio properly is a skill. Voice procedure training will provide radio operators with the basic knowledge of how to improve those skills in the use of two-way radio communication.

Even the best radios can suffer from interference; Proper voice procedure is used to save time and improve accuracy at such time, as well as during normal conditions.

There are two basic considerations when talking on the air.

- (a) **WHAT TO SAY** Voice procedure
- (b) **HOW TO SAY IT** Voice Technique

### **WHAT IS VOICE PROCEDURE?**

Voice procedure is a set of rules designed to provide, **ACCURACY** and **DISCIPLINE** when speaking on the radio.

The necessity for **ACCURACY** cannot be over emphasized. The following practices will help enhance better voice procedure and technique.

<b>THINK</b>	Before you speak.
<b>RHYTHM</b>	Adequate pauses in between transmissions. Give others a chance to break in if need be.
<b>SPEED</b>	Slow down, especially when dealing with formal messages.
<b>VOLUME</b>	Speak directly into the microphone.
<b>PITCH</b>	Do not drop the pitch of your voice because a medium or higher pitch is easier to copy. (That is why women make very good radio dispatchers)

Radio **DISCIPLINE** is the responsibility of every operator, and he or she should adhere to the following:

- (a) Listen before you speak.
- (b) Use correct voice procedure.
- (c) Answer all calls promptly.
- (d) Keep the airways free of unnecessary talk.
- (e) Be brief and to the point

This can be difficult, especially for those of us who in the past worked as professional radio operators and have become lazy. It is hard to break bad habits. Yours truly started off as a disciplined operator and now very much needs the practice to become more disciplined if I am going to serve the community well in case of emergency.

### **Standard Prowords and their Description:**

Prowords are used to indicate a specific meaning by replacing abbreviated sentences or phrases. They are standard, easily pronounced words, and their use can speed up message handling on radio networks, reducing the chance of an error being introduced into a message.

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Word or Phrase	Meaning
Affirmative	Normally used when a question is asked and the reply is YES
Break	Interruption to a transmission
Disregard	This transmission has been made in error – ignore
Cancel	Message # or “My last transmission
EMERGENCY Or Break, Break, Break	Only to be used when there is <b>‘grave or imminent danger to life’</b> . Immediate assistance is required
Figures	Numbers to follow
Go ahead or Pass you message	I am ready to copy your message
I spell	Next word will be spelt out using the phonetic alphabet
I say again	I am repeating my transmission or portion requested
Negative	Normally used when a question is asked and the reply is NO.
Out	End of transmission, no answer is required or expected <i><b>NOTE: “OVER AND OUT” is MEANINGLESS and an invention of the film industry!</b></i>
Over	Invitation to transmit
Roger	Message was received and understood. Can be used with the words over or out
Roger so far	Confirm parts of long message before continuing with rest of message
Say again	Repeat all of your last transmission
Say all after	Repeat all after a certain word or key phrase
Say all before	Repeat all before a certain word or key phrase
Standby	Wait for a short period and I will get back to you.
Sitrep	Means a situation report at your location
Wait over or Wait one	Wait for a short period and I will get back to you
Wait out	The waiting period is longer than “wait over” I will call you as soon as possible
Wrong	Indicates an error has been made and the message will be repeated from the last correctly transmitted word

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## Phonetic Alphabet

In normal conversations, when someone has difficulty understanding an unfamiliar word or name, the best way to get it across is to spell it. If you are asked, use phonetics. Or, if in your judgment they will help, use them. Over a radio words are spelt phonetically to avoid confusion.

Example: ETA should be spoken as - Echo Tango Alpha.

Since many letters sound the same, phonetic alphabets have been developed to allow communicators to spell without confusion. The phonetic alphabet used by Hams is the same as used by the **military services, aviation** facilities and **mariners** worldwide.

A	ALPHA	N	NOVEMBER
B	BRAVO	O	OSCAR
C	CHARLIE	P	PAPA
D	DELTA	Q	QUEBEC
E	ECHO	R	ROMEO
F	FOXTROT	S	SIERRA
G	GOLF	T	TANGO
H	HOTEL	U	UNIFORM
I	INDIA	V	VICTOR
J	JULIET	W	WHISKEY
K	KILO	X	X-RAY
L	LIMA	Y	YANKEE
M	MIKE	Z	ZULU

Some amateurs love to invent their own phonetics. It is my opinion that if you want to be involved in emergency communications it is safer and more professional to stick with the standard format above, but never criticize another's preferences within the hobby.

## SIGNAL REPORTING

### THE R-S-T SYSTEM

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) dictates the standard of reporting signal readability strength and tone. This system for HF operation has three scales for SSB/CW operation, 1 – 5 for readability and 1 – 9 for strength and tone. The tone report is used only for Morse code operations.

Whenever an initial radio check call is made the receiving station needs to inform the other station making the request how the receiving signal is being heard. To do this the following scale should be used.

### READABILITY

- 1 Unreadable.
- 2 Barely readable some words now & then.
- 3 Readable with considerable difficulty.
- 4 Readable with practically no difficulty

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5 Perfectly readable (Loud & Clear)

## SIGNAL STRENGTH

- 1 Faint signals
- 2 Very weak signals
- 3 Weak signals
- 4 Fair signals
- 5 Fairly good signals
- 6 Good signals
- 7 Moderately strong signals
- 8 Strong signals
- 9 Extremely strong signals

## INITIATING A CALL

Whenever you are using a radio for the first time, or there is doubt about the performance of your radio, the simplest check that can be done is what is known as a “RADIO CHECK”. The call should consist of the following:

The call sign of the station being called.	VE7DEE
The words “THIS IS.”	This is
The call sign of the station calling.	VA7ZA
The words “RADIO CHECK.”	Radio check, over
The proword “OVER”	

If the response on HF is

Station calling, this is Victor Echo 7 Delta Echo Echo, you are three by four, say again your call sign. Over.

*Note: he also may have said “your report is three by four “or some variation thereof.*

**You now know you have your work cut out for you!**

A little bit of practice in your everyday operating will make you an old hand at a lot of the above and it will be much easier for you to understand the skills of sending and receiving formal as well as informal traffic.

As you go along you will find more Prowords and procedures but it is my hope that the above will give you a good grounding.

Years ago, a lot of attention was paid to the amateur radio creed that among other things emphasized courtesy and respect on the air. You cannot go wrong if you make it your personal operating creed. You may never run into a rude or discourteous situation on the air but if you do, you win by changing frequency or switching off and not having your chain pulled by one of the few idiots in radio land. Above all else, enjoy the magic of radio.

For those who are not comfortable with traffic handling on the air, but wish to be of service to the community, please become familiar with the practices and procedures that we work with. By doing so, it will allow you to be a valuable assistant to the operators in an Emergency Communications Centre.