Two-Way Radio Etiquette

Get familiar with the etiquette of two-way radio communication. Learn walkie talkie lingo. To make radio communication go more smoothly, over the years certain rules, or etiquette, have been established. Below we have outlined the basic etiquette a radio user should understand. It will help improve your overall experience when using your radio!

Basic Radio Etiquette Rules

- **The international radio language is English,** except in cases where you are licensed to speak in some other language.

- When using a two-way radio **you cannot speak and listen at the same time,** as you can with a phone.

- **Don't interrupt** if you hear other people talking. Wait until their conversation is finished unless it is an emergency. If it is an emergency, inform the other parties that you have a urgent emergency message (see "Emergency Calls" below).

- **Do not respond if you aren't sure the call is for you.** Wait until you hear your call sign to respond.

- **Never transmit sensitive, confidential, financial or military information.** Unless you are certain your conversations are secured with the proper level of encryption for the level of sensitivity, assume your conversations can be heard by others.

- **Perform radio checks to ensure your radio is in good working condition.**

    - Ensure the battery is charged and the power is on.

    - Keep the volume high enough to be able to hear calls.

    - Regularly make radio checks to make sure everything is working and that you are still in range to receive signals.

- **Memorize call signs and locations of persons and radio stations you communicate with regularly**.

    - In radio communication you are not called by your name. Everybody has their own unique call sign.

- **Think before you speak**.

    - Decide what you are going say and to whom it is meant for.

    - Make your conversations as concise, precise, and clear as possible.

    - Avoid long and complicated sentences. If your message is long, divide it into separate shorter messages.

    - Do not use abbreviations unless they are well understood by your group.

4 Golden Rules of Radio Communication

1. Clarity: Your voice should be clear. Speak a little slower than normal. Speak in a normal tone, do not shout.

2. Simplicity: Keep your message simple enough for intended listeners to understand.

3. Brevity: Be precise and to the point.

4. Security: Do not transmit confidential information on a radio unless you know the proper security technology is in place. Remember, frequencies are shared, you do not have exclusive use of the frequency.

Speaking The Language

General Terms	Meaning
Radio Check	What is my signal strenght? Can you hear me?
Go Ahead	You are ready to receive transmission.
Stand-by	You acknowledge the other party, but I am unable to respond immediately.
Roger or **Ten Four**	Message received and understood.
Negative	Same as "No".
Affirmative	Same as "Yes". Avoid "yup" or "nope" as they are difficult to hear.
Say Again	Re-transmit your message
Over	Your message is finished.
Out	All conversation is finished, the channel is clear for others to use.
Break, Break, Break	You are interrupting in the middle of communication because you have an emergency.
Read you loud & clear	Response to "Radio Check". Means your transmission signal is good. Also use "**Read you 5-by-5**".
Come in	You are asking the other party to asknowlege they hear you.
Copy	You understand what was said.
Wilco	Means "I will comply".
Repeat	Used before you repeat something. ex: *"I require 9-5, **repeat** 9-5, gallons of diesel fuel. Over"*

Sécurité	Safety call. Alert to some safety warning. Repeat 3 times. Has priority over routine calls.
Pan-Pan	Urgent call. Help needed. Repeat 3 times. Has priority over safety calls.
MayDay	Distress call. Repeat 3 times, and again following each transmission. Has priority over all other calls.

These terms can be combined such as "Roger Wilco" means "I understand and will comply", or

" Out" means "I've finished talking and I'm signing off".

Making a Call

Follow these easy steps to make a call.

1. First listen to **ensure the channel is clear** for you.

2. **Press the PTT** (Push-To-Talk) button.

3. After 2 seconds:

   - **Say** *"recipient's call sign"* **twice**

   - followed by **"THIS IS" and** *"your call sign***".**

4. Once the person replies, **convey your message.**

Here's a typical radio conversation:

***You*:**	"Papa November One, Papa November One, This is Papa November Nine, Come in, Over" *(PN1 is their call sign, PN9 is your call sign)*
***Recipi-ent*:**	"Papa November Nine, This is Papa November One, Go Ahead, Over"
You:	*Say your message and then say:* "Over"
***Recipi-ent*:**	"Roger Wilco, Over"
***You*:**	"This is Papa November Nine, Out"

Did you notice how at the beginning and end of the transmission you pronounce your **call sign**? Because there can sometimes be many people listening on the frequency, pronouncing your call sign, and the call sign of the party you are calling, lets everyone know who the transmission is for. Communicating this way might feel a little odd at first, but you'll soon get use to it. With practice it will start to feel natural.

Emergency Calls

If you have an emergency message and need to interrupt others' conversations:

- Wait and listen until you hear "Over".

- Press PTT and say "BREAK, BREAK, BREAK, *your call sign*, I have emergency message for *(recipient's call sign)*, Do you copy, Over".

Memorize the Phonetic Alphabet

- It is almost certain you will have to use it in your conversations.

- You will often be required to spell a certain word or name in your radio conversations to make sure you are understood.

- Using the phonetic equivalents instead of letters will make sure letters such as 'F' are not misinterpreted as 'S', 'T' as 'C', or 'M' as 'N'.

Following is a list showing the international phonetics used for the alphabet:

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