

GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

These guidelines are for providing communications support of a public service event like a charity walk or a parade. This function is much different from the communications involved in disaster relief. While public service is important, it is a less critical mission. The planning time is longer, but the event duration is shorter. In general communication will be VHF or UHF simplex, with repeaters used only if a long distance or large area is covered.

Early planning meetings:

1. Place your name on the signup roster. (With a phone number so you can be contacted.)
2. Make note of the date, start time, location, and duration of event.
3. Find out what frequency band(s) are going to be used. Are other radio services going to be used as well? (GMRS, FRS, CB, CAP)
4. Will your job be portable or mobile
5. Note the check-in / talk-in frequency.
6. Where is the rallying point, and what time should you be there. Are directions or a map to this location available.
7. Arrange transportation if needed. Offer to assist others if you can.

Preparation: The day before - What to do

Check out your equipment. Test the radios, charge the batteries. Make sure the accessories work and everything fits together.

1. Know the programming basics for your radio (simplex, repeaters, PL tone, power level, Tx/RX savers).
2. If frequencies are available in advance, program them into your radios.
3. Check your club's Web site for last minute updates.
4. Check the weather so you know how to dress.
5. Set your alarm and get a good night's sleep. A lot of events start early in the morning.

Preparation: The day before - What to bring:

This [checklist](#) is overkill, but a good reference. It is a little more comprehensive than this list. Print it out for your use.

1. Radio and backup radio.
2. Batteries and spares.
3. Use extendable antennas for better range. Mag-mounts for mobile operations.
4. Cheat-sheets needed to help navigate the radios menus.
5. Earphones, most public service events are very noisy. Headphones with a mic can also be considered.
6. Notepad, pens, pencils.
7. Reflective vest, if used by the group.
8. Small backpack or belt bag to keep supplies in. A fishing vest or a lot of coat pockets work too. Just know where everything is.
9. Name badge, event issued ID, your amateur license wallet card.
10. Appropriate clothing, dress in layers to permit easy adaptation to temperature. If you need to wear gloves, make sure you can still operate your radio. If wet weather is guaranteed, a dry pair of socks (kept dry in a baggie) will feel good at the end of the day.
11. A disposable poncho takes little room and is good insurance if there's the slightest chance of rain.
12. Footwear should be comfortable; weather and location appropriate.
13. Personal first aid kit; pair of rubber gloves, a few bandages, packet of "aspirin", sunscreen. This is for your use, call in all medical problems. Use the gloves if you need to handle someone who is bleeding. **Call it in first** - that is your job - Communication.
14. Comfort items; moist towelettes, some pieces of hard candy - keeps the throat moist, tissues/hankerchief.
15. Flashlight and spare batteries (If the event is held a night) Consider chemlights and a clip-on reading light to keep your hands free. A flashing blinker could be useful if net control asks you to mark your position so you can be found.
16. Water bottle (full)
17. Snack - granola bars keep your energy up.
18. Small plastic trash bag. Assemble your gear the day before. Be aware of what you have. This list is not

deffinitive, take what you think you will need, leave what you won't. You don't want it too heavy, but don't forget the essentials. If you have access to your vehicle during the event, some items can be stashed there. Take the event duration into account during your planning and packing.

Event Day: Pre-Event

1. Call in on the talk-in frequency, to see if there are any last minute changes, or something / somebody needs to be picked up.
2. Arrive on time.
3. Check in with net control at the rallying point.
4. Read the assignment sheets and maps that are given to you.
5. Note any last-minute changes.
6. Write down primary and secondary frequencies. Make a note of FRS/GMRS/CB channels if they are being used.
7. Write down net controls cell phone number.
8. Write down your tactical call (if being used).
9. Find out who is where; write tactical calls, names, and call signs on the map.
10. Deploy to your assigned location.
11. Introduce yourself to event officials / workers at your location. Explain to them what your function is.
12. Check-in with net control that you are on location. Make sure you can be heard. Make adjustments to equipment or a slight position move if necessary so you have clear contact with control. If you need to make a major position change, advise net control of new location and why.

Event Day: Things We Do

1. **Shadows** - These are the people who follow the race officials and those who must be in communication with others. Our job is to keep them informed of significant events and race progress, and communicate for and with them when asked. Keeping race officials informed of race progress is very important and shows the real value of amateur radio over other forms of communication they may have used or considered.
2. **Course Locations** - You should

- a. **Look** for and report medical or safety issues.
 - b. **Report** lead/last runner locations, parade element locations.
 - c. **Report** problems on the course.
 - d. **Stay** in your assigned location.
 - e. **Be aware** of your surroundings. Most events are noisy and confusing, and your hearing will be impaired by your headphones. Parades have vehicles and floats that are always moving. Most races are held on closed off streets, but vehicles do sneak past the barricades.
 - f. **Keep logs:** If you call in any emergency assistance requests, either medical or police, log the time and the nature of the request. A copy of this should be given to net control at the end of the event. Keep your original log.
 - g. **Take notes:** If you have any ideas for changes that could make the event better, note them down while you are thinking of them.
3. **Occasionally** we are asked by officials to perform other duties, permission for this needs to be granted by net control, they expect you to be where assigned. An example would be traffic control in parking lots.

Event Day: Things We Should Not Do

1. **Don't: initiate your own traffic.** Report events as they occur, but don't keep checking in with net control. They know you are there. Extra check-in's clog up the frequency and slows the passing of necessary messages. Read the information on the handouts and ask all questions before deploying. Of course, there should be zero traffic not related to supporting the event at hand.
2. **Don't: make our own decisions.** In general, we are to carry out the instructions of the event officials and organizers, not what we think is best. For the smaller events, the planning consists of learning the responsibilities of the race officials. For larger events, net control personal will have attended event planning meetings, to meet the event officials and work out procedures and expectations, so that on event day workers can carry out pre-authorized decisions.
3. **Don't: offer advice.** It is the event officials' jobs to make the decisions. If you have information they may not be aware of, this can be passed to them if appropriate.

4. **We are not first-aid providers.** In a medical emergency our first responsibility is to advise net control that there is an emergency and exactly where it is. Call "Break! Break!" and let net control acknowledge, then report type and location. If net wants additional details, they will ask for them.
5. **We are not police.** Any civil disturbances should be reported to net control immediately. We cannot direct vehicle traffic on public streets. We do not have the authority.
6. Remember, we are there as **support**, not **control**.

Event Day: Post-Event

1. Check out of the net.
2. Cleanup your area. Take your trash with you.
3. Say good-bye to event personal you worked with, don't just disappear.
4. Go to post-event rallying point for an event review session.
 - a. Turn in any emergency logs.
 - b. Report any problems encountered.
 - c. Discuss changes / improvements possible for the next event.
5. Follow up on transportation agreements.

Good Operating Procedure

1. Net Control is in charge of all traffic on the net. Follow their lead and don't talk out of turn. Instead, be patient and wait until you are recognized.
2. *Listen to all traffic so that you know what is going on.* You may know the answer to a question being asked. But it is net control's job to provide the answer. Don't break in unless you hear net control going down the wrong path, at which time you should go ahead and call control with something like, "Net control, I have information on that, K6WLS".
3. **Keep your antennas vertical.**
4. Speak 4 to 6 inches away from the mike. If someone says " I can't understand you" - **try talking more SOFTLY!** Speak slowly and clearly, especially if you are asked to repeat your traffic because you couldn't be understood. Yelling into the mic isn't the answer.
5. Don't use phonetics unless spelling vital information.

6. Face into the wind to cut down on wind noise.
7. After silences longer than 3 seconds, where most radios' receive battery savers kick in, remember to key your mike for about 1/2 second before speaking so that the beginning of your transmission is not cut off. Watch your Tx/Rx display when you are getting ready to transmit. For shorter events, it's better to turn the battery saver function off, but during longer events they can cut your battery use in half.
8. Follow your last transmission with "OUT" so that others know you have nothing else to say and you don't require a response. This is sort of an "OK to transmit" message to the next person who may be waiting to pass traffic on the net. When they hear this they will know that your turn is over and that they may proceed. Consistently following this practice will prevent doubles, or your being cut off prematurely.
9. If multiple frequencies are being used, program them into memory to make switching between them faster. Turn off the display light to lengthen battery life.
10. Dress professionally - you are representing your club and amateur radio. This means neat and clean, clothing appropriate to the event. Wear an amateur name badge.

Use Proper Identification on the Air

We frequently use tactical call signs like "Race Director" or "Check Point 1" to speed traffic handling. However, we are still required to follow FCC ID requirements - you must transmit your assigned amateur call sign "...at the end of each communication, and at least every 10 minutes during a communication...".

1. Most traffic exchanges will last much less than 10 minutes. Simply call Net Control with your traffic and end with your call i.e.: {*You*} Net Control this is Check Point 1. {*Net Control*} This is Net Control, go ahead Check Point 1. {*You*} The first runner has passed Check Point 1 (your position). K3FI OUT. {*Net Control*} Roger, Check Point 1. WM3PEN OUT.
2. In the event that you are cut off by another station before you can sign properly, simply wait until their traffic exchange has been concluded and then you can sign: "K6WLS OUT." Net Control will understand the situation.

3. When in doubt, feel free to use your call sign during your traffic exchange. There is no rule in Part 97 about excessive call sign use.

Modified from www.harcnet.org/