

## **Net Control Tips**

Adapted from Waller County Ares Training

***If the net is a scheduled net, start on time!*** Tardiness indicates poor management and doesn't inspire confidence in the NCS.

***Use a script when possible.*** This promotes efficient operation. If you have time, annotate your script with updates before you start the net. Have the applicable preamble handy, and a roster to keep the net moving smoothly. A roster also assists in keeping names, calls and locations together. (This can be really important, especially in the wee morning hours.)

***Be friendly, yet in control.*** Speak slowly and clearly with an even tone, not a monotone. Speak with confidence, even if you are inwardly nervous.

***Ask specific questions -- give specific instructions.*** This reduces the need for "repeats" and prevents confusion.

***Have pencil/paper ready and write down ALL calls.*** Practice writing down calls when you are not the NCS.

***Read your radio owners' manual and know your radio before an emergency occurs.*** Random fumbling with the knobs wastes valuable time and is very unprofessional. Know how to quickly switch your receiver to the reverse frequency when using a repeater. Sometimes the other station is close enough that you can copy them but they cannot open the repeater effectively.

***Know how to use your microphone.*** The worst NCS is one that cannot be heard or sounds like a train huffing and puffing into the microphone. Articulate, don't slur. Speak close to your mike, but talk across it, not into it.

***When there is a "double"*** (i.e., when two or more stations transmit on the same frequency at the same time), ***listen to see if you can identify either station by call sign, voice, or by text.*** Then, ask all stations to stand by while you solicit clarification or repeats from each station involved, as needed.

***During check-ins, recognize participants by name whenever possible.*** It helps boost morale.

***Frequently identify the name and purpose of the net.*** Advise listeners of the sub-audible squelch tone (CTCSS or DCS) required, if applicable.

***Don't be afraid to ask for assistance if you need it.*** The net manager should be able to assist you. That is part of their job.

***If the net is an emergency operation, tell listeners where to go for other nets,*** such as resource nets. A listener checking in to say simply that they are listening degrades net efficiency.

***You will make mistakes.*** Acknowledging them will earn the respect and support of net members.

***Don't think on-the-air.*** If you need a moment to consider what is needed next, say something like "stand by" and un-key your microphone. This adds a professional touch.

***Keep transmissions as short as possible.*** This is probably Number One of the top-ten tips.

***Transmit only facts.*** If there is a real need to make an educated guess or to speculate, make it clear to others that it is only speculation and not fact.

***Avoid becoming the source for general information about the event.*** If it is an emergency, refer event status questions to the proper public information net or Public Information Officer (PIO).

***When necessary, use standard ITU phonetics.*** There is no such thing as "common spelling." Send all numbers as individual numbers, e.g., 334 is "three three four" not "three hundred thirty four."

***For voice nets, use plain English.*** "Q" signals are for CW. Another top-ten tip.

***If the net has been quiet for more than ten minutes, check on operator status.*** This keeps the net running more smoothly and insures that you know about equipment failures and missing operators as soon as possible.

## **IMPORTANT:**

One of the functions and duties of an NCS is to keep a current list of stations checking in, where they are, their individual assignments, and what capabilities they have. This goes along with logging or record keeping which is very important and causes many a good NCS to slip. This information is important during the operation or incident, and also is needed during the after-action reports following the conclusion of the incident.

## **Links:**

For more information on the information presented, please consult the following links:

<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/pscm/index.html>

For more information on the net control function, please see the *ARRL Operating Manual*, chapter on emergency communications. See also the *ARRL ARES Field Manual*. To learn more about local and section-wide ARES and NTS net operation, contact your Section Manager (SM), your Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) or District Emergency Coordinator (DEC). See <http://www.arrl.org/field/org/smlist.html>. See also the *ARRL Net Directory* for a list of ARES and NTS nets operating in your area.