

MARIN COUNTY CERT 2019

Tips for using Handheld Radios (Walkie-Talkies)

- Face towards the direction of the station you are calling so your body does not block the signal.
- Hold radio vertical and talk across, not into the mike.
- **Keep calm**, and keep your voice calm, even if you are not. Use clear, plain language and a normal tone. Shouting into the microphone, even when you are in a noisy environment, only distorts the signal.
- Walkie-talkies are not like a phone. You cannot hear others when you are sending, and vice versa.

SENDING

- Think First of what you wish to say in short, clear sentences
- Push transmit button, count one second and then begin talking. ○
- State the name or unit you are trying to reach.
- Give your team ID ○ Say "Over."
- Count one second and release the transmit button.
- **Keep calm**, wait to be recognized.
- **Example:** "Command, this is Search and Rescue Team 1, over."
- Only after you are recognized should you send your message. Keep it brief, end with "over."
- If it doesn't need to be said, don't say it; silence is golden.

TROUBLESHOOTING

- Make sure you are on agreed-upon channel.
- Check for low or dead battery.
- Make sure volume is turned up.
- If reception or transmission is scratchy or garbled, try moving your location, even just a few feet.
- **DO NOT** turn-off your radio or turn the volume down while out in the field. If it is distracting while you are dealing with a situation, hand the radio off to another team member to monitor. If it is essential to be off-frequency for a bit, inform command before leaving radio, and on return. Otherwise command, one of whose responsibilities is the safety of teams, may think you have become a victim and might well send a rescue team to your last-known location.

ENDING TRANSMISSION

- Say name of person or unit you are communicating with.
- Confirm you understand information transmitted.
- Give your team ID
- Say "Clear," or "Out." (These terms are interchangeable.)
- **Example:** "Command, message is understood. Search and Rescue Team 1, out."

TIPS

Think & plan before you talk. Keep it short. Speak slowly and clearly. Do not ramble or repeat unnecessarily. Do not use variations on the agreed-on tactical calls. **ABOVE ALL, KEEP YOUR VOICE CALM!** A number of team leaders will have radios. Sometimes you will not receive an immediate response to your initial call. Please respect the hectic nature of what's going on at the command post, where you may be only one of many trying to communicate. If you have an emergency that is clearly more important than the call in progress, but only then, you may interrupt with the words "break-break." In a back-and-forth with another station, always pause before transmitting in order to give another station a chance to break in, if necessary. "Breaking in" should be used very rarely, since it will interrupt the flow of work at the command post. Wait until the command post says "*breaker go ahead*" before continuing.

Always carry extra batteries!

Marin County CERT radio protocol, October 2019