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Tactical Call Signs

1.1 OVERVIEW.

Thank you, Bob and good evening to the net. Tonight's training topic is tactical call signs. In this presentation I will try to answer three questions.

a.   What is a tactical call sign?

b.   How is a tactical call sign assigned?

c.   How should a tactical call sign be used in a radio net?

1.2 WHAT IS A TACTICAL CALL SIGN?

Tactical call signs are used to identify a specific location or function that may be staffed by different operators during a drill, exercise, or activation event. Tactical call signs allow an individual to contact a station or location without knowing the FCC call sign of the individual staffing the location, you only need to know the tactical call sign. Even if the operator at a specific location changes, the tactical call sign does not.

When assigning tactical call signs, it's important to ensure that the call sign has a meaning that matches the location or function of the station. For example:

a.   PINELLAS EOC: This is the Emergency Operations Center for Pinellas County.

b.   BOCA CIEGA HIGH: This is the emergency evacuation shelter located at Boca Ciega High School.

c.   CHECK POINT 1: This is the first checkpoint at a public service event.

d.   AID STATION: This is the medical aid station for a public service event.

1.3 HOW ARE TACTICAL CALL SIGNS ASSIGNED?

The assignment of tactical call signs will fall in to two general categories: The first category covers the partial or full activation of ACS in support of a drill, exercise, or emergency event that would require the deployment of individuals to evacuation shelters, hospitals, fire stations,

and other critical locations. The second category would cover non-emergency activities such as public service events.

When the activation is in support of a drill, exercise, or emergency event, individuals will normally be deployed to predetermined fixed locations within the county. Because we already know most of the locations that will need ACS operators during an emergency, tactical call signs for each location have been pre-assigned and are listed in the Pinellas ACS Emergency Communications Plan. If members are deployed to a location that is not listed in the plan, the NCS will assign the new location a tactical call sign in real-time.

Individuals who are not deployed and are operating from their home QTH will continue to use their FCC call sign when exchanging information on the net, unless, they are performing a formal role such as Net Control.

In contrast, the approach used to assign tactical call signs during a public service event is considerably different. Each event will likely have different support requirements and the number of ACS volunteers will vary from event to event. Therefore, the ACS point of contact for each event will create a list of the tactical call signs needed to support the event and provide the list to the ACS volunteers at the start of the event.

1.4   HOW SHOULD A TACTICAL CALL SIGN BE USED IN A RADIO NET?

Tactical call signs do not take the place of FCC call signs.

NOTE: *The FCC, Part 97.119, requires all stations to identify themselves at least once every ten-minutes and at the end of the station's last transmission. When using tactical call signs, users should end their last transmission by stating their tactical call sign followed by their FCC call sign.*

Example:

> *BOCA CIEGA HIGH*:   PINELLAS EOC this is BOCA CIEGA HIGH, one priority
>
> *PINELLAS EOC:*   BOCA CIEGA HIGH go ahead with you message

The two stations would continue the exchange, using only tactical call signs, until the receiving station acknowledges that the message has been received.

PINELLAS EOC: PINELLAS EOC, *<FCC Call Sign>*; OUT

BOCA CIEGA HIGH: BOCA CIEGA HIGH, WA1RYQ; OUT

By sending your FCC call sign at the end of the exchange you signify to the NCS that the exchange is complete and meet the FCC requirement for proper identification.

1.5   SUMMARY

Let me summarize with a few dos and don'ts.

a.   It's Important that we get in the habit of using Tactical Call signs during drills, exercises and public service events. These are great opportunities to practice proper net procedures.

b.   During drills, exercises, and emergency activation events use the Tactical Call signs listed in the communication plan.

c.   Consistently use the same Tactical Call sign assigned to each location. Don't refer to a location as BOCA CIEGA HIGH during one exchange and then use BC HIGH SCHOOL during the next exchange.

d.   Always used the correct phonetic alphabet during exchanges.

1.6   QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

I'd like to pause here for a minute and ask if anyone has a comment or question about tonight's presentation. If you have a comment or question, please provide me with your call sign, slowly, clearly, and phonetically so I don't make a mistake when I respond. And then ask your question or provide me with your comment.

This is WA1RYQ.

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">[PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS]</p>

1.7   CONCLUSION.

That's all I have for this week's training session. Let me conclude with a couple of announcements.

1. I will be out of town next week so I will not be available during next week's training net.
2. There will be no Winlink Training this week. I have not yet scheduled the next training net. I'll do so after I return home.
3. I strongly encourage everyone to provide comments and suggestions for future training activities. I can be contacted at WA1RYQ@ARRL.net. Or you can leave me a note on the Pinellas ACS groups.io web site.

Now with that, I'll turn it back to Net Control.

1.8 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

The following table contains a summary of the comments and questions provided by the membership during the presentation.

No.	Call Sign	Comments	Response
1	W8QFV	Individuals should always use proper ITU phenetics.	
2	KQ4GAH	Isn't the sending station suppose to "Clear" or "out" first since they are the sending station?	Will investigate. Will put additional detail in the example.
		No additional comments	