

TACTICAL CALLS

The use of Tactical Calls at Public Service Events is becoming more and more common place and it is legal. The use of tactical calls can and does increase the efficiency and speed in identifying a specific function or person. They also eliminate confusion when working with other agencies that have no idea what amateur radio call signs is or means. Using “ Rest Stop 1 from Net Control” is a lot easier and to the point than “K5XXX this is W4III.” The assignment of tactical call should, if possible, relate to the amateurs function at the event. Tactical calls such as “Sag 1, Aid Station 4, Police 2, First Aid, Logistics” and so on provide a verbal “picture” of the function.

The use of tactical call signs at an event does not relieve the amateur radio operator of the responsibility of identifying his or her self with their FCC assigned call sign. As required in Part 97.119(a) of the FCC Regulations, the amateur radio station must transmit its assigned call sign on its transmitting frequency at the end of each communication, and at least every 10 minutes during a communication. This is to clearly make sure the source of the transmission from that station is known to those receiving the transmission. Although the amateur is not required to identify at the beginning of the communication, doing so is just common courtesy and good operating practice and should be the norm. Besides that, most events have a mix of amateurs that may not have worked together before and therefore are not recognizable by voice. In some cases it would be prudent for the net control operator to poll the net using call signs at 10 minute intervals if the event activity permits. In any case it is the responsibility of the individual amateur to transmit his or her call sign as required by the FCC.

Another method not used locally is to append a special suffix to the end of the call sign. It must be separated from the call sign by the slant mark or a word to that effect. This could be something like “K5XXX ‘slant or slash’ Rover.” There are some terms , letters and numbers or words that cannot be used as a suffix. Refer to FCC Part 97.119(c) for details.