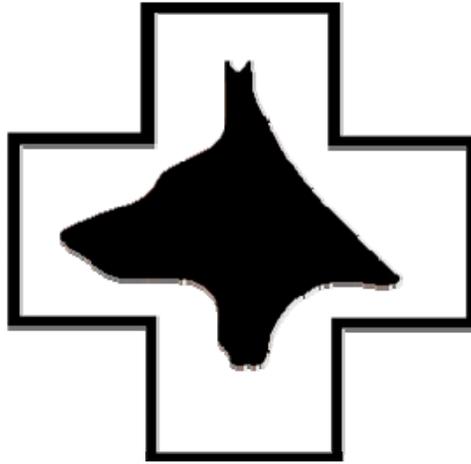
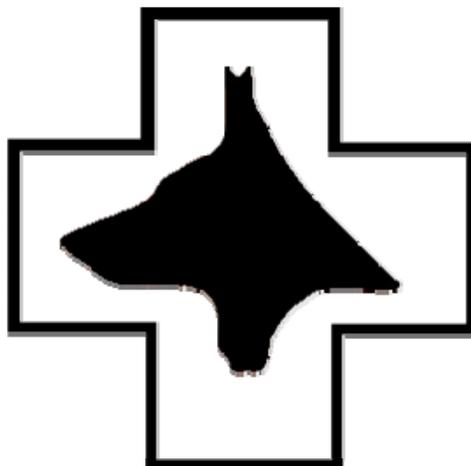


# American Rescue Dog Association



## Canine Team Standards and Certification Procedures

# American Rescue Dog Association



## Appendix D – Radio Protocol

Date Last Updated:  
January 2007

Date Last Reviewed:  
May 2016

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## Appendix D: Radio Protocol

### ARDA RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES – January, 2007

1. The Operational Leader will determine which of the following methods will be used for identification of the field teams:
  - a. The field team is identified by the Field Team Leader's number, as assigned by the Unit.  
**[Note:** In ARDA, the Field Team Leader is usually the dog handler].
  - b. The field team will be identified by the sector or the task they are assigned.  
**[Note:** ARDA Units may issue numbers to their operational dog handlers and other field team leaders to be used for field team identification. The numbers are issued on an "as needed" basis].
2. Prior to sending teams into the field, the Operational Leader will determine which channel or channels are to be used for radio communications. It is the responsibility of the Operational Leader to ensure that this information is disseminated to all Field Team Leaders and it is the responsibility of each Field Team Leader to verify this information before leaving the Base Camp.  
**Note:** If possible, it is recommended that mobile telephones be used as backup equipment to the radios. In this case, it is the responsibility of the Operational Leader to ensure that all Field Team Leaders are provided the phone number for the Base phone and that Base has the mobile phone number for each team prior to the team being deployed into the field.
3. Upon receiving the radio, the Field Team Leader is to perform a radio equipment check before entering the field (e.g., antenna condition, battery, correct channel). The Field Team Leader is responsible for this CRITICAL EQUIPMENT and makes every effort to maintain it in good condition for the team's safety and the success of the mission.
4. Begin all transmissions by identifying who you are trying to contact: either "Base" (if you are a field team) or the "team identifier" (if you are Base) then identify yourself and wait for acknowledgement before transmitting your message. End all conversations by signing off with your team identifier and the word "clear".

#### Example

Field team calling base	:	"Base, Unit 16" (wait)
Base acknowledgement	:	"Base ( <i>standing</i> ) by"
Team transmits message	:	"Unit 16 is starting task"
Base acknowledge	:	"Base copies Unit 16 is starting task"
Team signs off	:	"Unit 16 clear"
Base signs off	:	"Base clear"

5. All field teams are to initiate a "radio [transmission] check" within five minutes of leaving Base Camp. Both sides of the transmission need to state their ability to hear in terms of volume and clarity. A scale of 1 to 5 may be used if it is understood by both parties - 1 being very poor and 5 being very good: 5 by 5 is loud and clear; 1 by 5 is barely loud enough to hear but is very clear.

**Example**

Team : "Base, Unit 18"  
Base : "Base by"  
Team : "Unit 18 requests a radio check"  
Base : "Unit 18 is Loud & Clear"  
Team : "Base is Loud & Clear"

On the initial radio check, if transmission is not clear, Base will request the team return to Base Camp to check the radio, and perhaps issue another radio. If the field team cannot contact Base for a radio check, or the transmission is of poor quality, the team is to check the radio for problems (such as a loose antenna) and return to Base Camp if the problem is not corrected. If radio transmission is in question, a radio check may be requested by Base or the team at any time while the team is in the field.

6. Allow approximately one minute for the team/Base to acknowledge a transmission before reinitiating your call. Transmitting without waiting for approximately one minute, can result in both units transmitting at the same time and neither being heard by the other. Keep in mind that Base may be busy and although they hear your call, may not be able to respond instantly.
7. Ensure Base is free before attempting contact to avoid interrupting communications with another team. You will most likely not be able to hear all transmissions from other teams in the field, but you should be able to hear Base's side of a dialog with another team. Wait until Base is clear.
8. All field teams are to advise Base of starting the task, ending the task, and returning to base camp to include an estimated time of arrival.
9. The Base Operator will be responsible for ensuring all personnel adhere to all Federal Communications Commission rules and regulations. All communications are to be carried out in a professional manner and according to ARDA radio procedures.
10. The Base Operator is responsible for maintaining a clear, concise, and secure radio log of all transmissions. The radio log is official documentation of the search. The agency in charge of the search is entitled to a copy, but the Unit should retain a copy for its records.
11. The Base Operator is to check the status of each field team every hour. Starting on the hour, Base will do a roll call, giving each field team's call sign, requesting status. The team gives its status in terms of its condition and estimated percentage of completion of the task. Base repeats it back and then giving the unit the time in 24 hour format (e.g., 3:30 p.m. would be 1530 hours). Field teams should not call times when communicating with Base or other teams.

### **Example**

Base calling a field team : "Unit 5, Base for status check"  
Team responds : "Unit 5 is okay [oscar kilo]. We have completed 25% of task"  
Base acknowledge, gives time : "Base copies Unit 5 okay, and is 25% complete at 1435"  
Team signs off : "Unit 5 clear"  
Base calling next team : "Unit 6, Base for status check"

12. If a field team has heard no sound from the radio for more than an hour, they should check the radio (volume, squelch, antenna) and attempt to contact Base. If no verbal contact is made with Base, the team should try changing location to a higher elevation. If verbal contact is still not successful, the team is to begin a series of clicks (hold down talk button) spaced about 3 seconds apart. Base should be able to hear the clicks and will begin contacting all field teams in sequential order. When the Field Team Leader initiating the clicks hears his team called, he should respond by repeatedly clicking the talk button. Base will confirm the identity of the team, and initiate a series of questions requiring yes or no answers to determine the team's condition and progress. The field team will respond with the click codes (click, click, click = yes; click, click, = no).
13. Ideally, field teams communicate only with Base and Base communicates directly with each field team. Any field team wishing to communicate with another field team must request and receive permission from Base before initiating such a call. Failure to wait for permission may interfere with Base's communications with another team.

### **Example**

Team : "Base, Unit 18"  
Base : "Base by"  
Team : "Request permission to go direct to Unit 16"  
Base : "Permission granted, Base clear."

Communications between field teams should be kept to a minimum.

**Exception to the rule:** If a field team needs to communicate with Base but cannot make contact due to distance or terrain, the team may broadcast a request for another field team to relay for them. The relaying team informs Base of the situation and then acts as a relay until the exchange of information is complete. Likewise, if Base cannot reach a team, it may ask another field team to relay.

14. Messages should be transmitted in short segments. Wait for a "we copy" or other appropriate response from the receiving party after each segment. Keep all transmissions brief. The more you transmit, the faster your battery will die.
15. When communicating from the field, teams need to remember that by-standers in Base Camp may overhear the transmission and should ask Base's permission before transmitting sensitive information. Base should secure their space from eavesdroppers and "Secure the NET" before allowing sensitive information to be transmitted. After "Securing

the NET”, Base needs to allow a full minute for field operators to turn down the volume on their radio. If a field operator starts transmitting sensitive information without permission, the Base Operator should immediately key the talk button and keep the key pressed to prevent the information being received and overheard by bystanders.

16. The Operational Leader and Base Operator retain their radios at all times. All other persons are to turn off their radios and return them to the Base Operator when in Base Camp. This allows for recharging and redistribution of the radios. It also prevents the media or other by-standers from overhearing transmissions from field radios left on in Base Camp.
17. Plain language is used for most radio communications. For clarity during transmission, the military alphabet is used for relaying letters: “Alpha” for “A”, “Bravo” for “B”, et cetera.
18. Radio codes and jargon are used for limited and specific messages. Radio codes are confidential and should NEVER be disclosed to the public. ARDA radio codes are to be used unless otherwise directed by the organization in charge of communications at each search. The Field Team Leader is responsible for checking with the Base Operator as to what codes are being employed at the search.

## **ARDA Radio Codes:**

### **Status Codes**

- Status 1 : Subject Found Alive & can walk out.
- Status 2 : Subject Found Alive but requires aid.
- Status 3 : Subject Found Deceased.

## Secure the NET

All units protect the channel. (Secure the NET before transmitting information about the subject, especially is Status 2 or 3.

When securing the NET, broadcast, "Secure the NET". Base will respond with, "Secure the NET, Secure the NET, Secure the NET". Before transmitting any sensitive information wait for Base to respond to the request to "Secure the NET". Once base has responded, wait a full minute to allow all radio operators time to turn down the volume on their radio.

## Radio Clicks

3 = Yes  
2 = No  
SOS : 3 Short, 3 Long, 3 Short

## Radio Jargon

**"Base by" or  
"Unit 18" by**

Used to acknowledge the caller and indicate a readiness to receive information. Short for "standing by and ready to receive your information".

**"Base copies" or  
"Unit 18 copies"**

Used to indicate that the caller's transmission has been heard and understood.

**"Secure the NET"**

The person is about to transmit sensitive information and requests that other system users take care in releasing sensitive information and should protect the channel. When you hear, "Secure the NET", turn down the volume on your radio if there are unauthorized people around that might overhear the sensitive information about to be transmitted.

**"Clear"**

Used to signify the end of the conversation. Both parties should transmit their identification followed by the work "clear" at the end of a series of transmissions. Using "clear" will let other teams know that they may initiate a call.

## Military Alphabet

A : Alpha	N : November
B : Bravo	O : Oscar
C : Charlie	P : Papa
D : Delta	Q : Quebec
E : Echo	R : Romeo
F : Foxtrot	S : Sierra
G : Golf	T : Tango
H : Hotel	U : Uniform
I : India	V : Victor
J : Juliet	W : Whiskey
K : Kilo	X : X-Ray
L : Lima	Y : Yankee
M : Mike	Z : Zulu

## Military Numbers

1 : Wun
2 : Too
3 : Three
4 : Fower
5 : Fife
6 : Siks
7 : Seven
8 : Ait
9 : Niner
0 : Zeero