THE BASICS

As communication specialists we seem to think that we always follow the training guidelines that we received many years ago, always doing what is right. But in reality what actually happens is that over time we fall into a communication world that does not fit into the guidelines of "The Basics of Radio Communication", with a quick review however we are back on track. ***This continuing education program is in no way intended to supersede you company policies and procedures; it is merely a review of the basics of radio communications.***

The ABCs of radio communications relate directly to the composition of any message broadcast over the radio. Before transmitting a message, always monitor the channel or frequency prior to transmitting, think about what you want to say and make sure you're presenting accurate information. You should always depress the Push to Talk (PTT) button, hesitate for a count of 'one thousand one" then talk this will avoid "front end clipping, (when you start talking and then depress the PTT, the party receiving your transmission receive it in mid sentence). Try to use short sentences with a single idea in each sentence; avoid "thinking out loud." (Otherwise, everyone listening may very well get a really good view of your thought processes and that can be pretty scary, sometimes!) If you lose your train of thought, or "talk yourself into a coma" stop transmitting! "Ummms" and "ahhs" sound unprofessional and should be avoided. Break your transmission with a "stand-by" alert, work out what you want to say, and start again. Basically, remember KISS, or Keep it Simple, Stupid. When finished with your radio transmission you need to stop talking, hesitate, and release the PTT, this is to prevent "rear end clipping" or the annoying loss of often-vital information at the end of your transmissions.

Remember how Mom always said, "Don't talk with your mouth full?" Well, in the communication environment, ANYTHING in your mouth will interfere with the clarity of your transmission. That means chewing gum, toothpicks, sunflower seeds, a cigarette, ANYTHING.

Don't talk louder just because the communication center is farther away, either. Don't mash the microphone up against your mouth; tilt it slightly at an angle and talk ACROSS the face of the transmitter portion (usually indicated by a grill-type effect on the body of the hand-held radio or the remote microphone). If you're dealing with a lot of outside or background noise, turn to FACE the source of the noise. This will put the sound on the "wrong" side of the microphone and your mouth on the "right" (or receiver) side. Don't make the mistake of turning your back on the source of extra noises, because those sounds will funnel right into the microphone along with what you have to say. **Do not shout**! Don't whisper. Speak in a normal, conversational volume. Shouting only over-modulates the electronic circuitry and your message will be lost in a garble of noise, whispering creates a slurred sound or even a failed transmission of information. Trust me on this.

Initiating a Radio Conversation

It is important that each communication center develops and follows their standards of initiating a radio conversation. The standard most commonly taught is "Hey you! This is me", or **"Air one, this is dispatch"**. This is done so that the aircraft being called does not miss their call sign or radio identifier, which is what attracts a listener's attention to the incoming call.

If you have more than one aircraft in the air at one time, following this procedure will reduce the confusion of whom you are attempting to contact. The aircraft will hear the specific identifier, **("Air one")** and know immediately you are attempting to contact them. Once you have properly initiated a radio conversation don't just blurt out what you need, try to prompt or pre-alert the pilot or crewmembers of what you are going to tell them, i.e. **"Air one, this is dispatch, I have coordinates when you are ready to copy".** Communicators should always allow the receiving party to acknowledge the transmission and then proceed with conversation.

Receiving a Radio Call

When receiving a radio call the communication specialist should put all other task aside, giving their full attention to the conversation, then select the proper channel or frequency, acknowledge the calling aircraft, and be prepared to hear, listen and understand the radio transmission. After receiving the radio transmission from the helicopter the communication specialist should repeat back the information to assure they received it correctly**. "Dispatch this is Air one, position report". "Air one go ahead with position".** This method of communication allows for both parties to ready themselves for communication between each other and lessens the potential for error.

Communicators and pilots alike are very busy performing their job functions; they don't just sit around facing the radio, listening hard for every precious radio transmission, the needs of the person calling on the radio can best be met if we can get a hint or a prompt of what the transmission is about, so that tasks can be put aside and all attention then can be placed upon the radio communication.

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Quiz

1. During a radio transmission, you start talking and then depress the PTT button, the receiving party begins receiving in mid sentence this is called?
    A. Tail end clipping
    B. Mid sentence communication
    C. Front-end clipping
    D. Standby alert

2. The microphone of the radio should be tilted slightly at an angle to allow you to talk across the transmitter portion.
    A. True
    B. False

3. When attempting to contact your helicopter by radio, the pilot cannot hear or understand you, you should shout into the microphone.
    A. True
    B. False

4. The standard most commonly taught for initiating a radio conversation is?
    A. "This is me, hey you"
    B. "Hey you, this is me"
    C. "Hey where are you"?
    D. "Call in soon"

5. The listener or radio traffic is attracted to the radio call by?
    A. Your identifier
    B. Your company name
    C. Their call sign or radio identifier
    D. The time of the call

6. A "pre-alert" is when you advise what you are going to tell the receiver.
    A. True
    B. False

7. The communication specialist should continue with the task they are performing while receiving radio transmissions.
    A. True
    B. False

8. The proper procedure for receiving a radio call from an aircraft is?
    A. Depress the PTT and respond as quickly as possible
    B. Listen to see if aircraft repeats transmission then respond
    C. Put all task aside, select proper channel acknowledge caller, hear, listen, and understand
    D. Continue with all your task and answer when you get time

9. You should never repeat back the information you receive in a radio transmission.
    A. True
    B. False

10. Talking on the radio with something in your mouth does not affect radio transmissions.
    A. True
    B. False

The Basics

ANSWER SHEET

Name: _____ *Please Print Legibly*
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Circle the appropriate letter

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3 A. B. C. D.
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5 A. B. C. D.
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