



## COLORADO ARES DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM

### ANNEX N NET PROCEDURES

December 6, 2006

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**IN AN EMERGENCY OPERATION, NET TIME IS VERY PRECIOUS  
WE MUST MINIMIZE THE TIME OUR RADIO IS TRANSMITTING**

1. There are two types of formal nets:
  - **Directed** – In a “directed” net there is a Net Control Station (NCS). For any station with traffic for the net, the first transmission is always directed to NCS. Directed nets are the most common type during incidents.
  - **Non-Directed** – Non-Directed Nets are less common; here there is no Net Control Station, all other formal net protocols still apply. Stations call one another direct without first having to go through a NCS. Non-directed nets are generally used ONLY when the volume of message traffic is very light. There is frequently an Officer or Staff Member monitoring the net, tactical callsign “COORDINATOR” available to answer questions or solve problems that might arise.
2. The most important rule is to gather your thoughts and formulate what you are going to say BEFORE you key your radio. Listen before you talk to make sure no-one is using the frequency. Key your radio and WAIT ½ second before talking. Pass your message and always END with your full call sign (this indicates you are finished and clear). If you do these things, you will be efficient and meet all FCC identification requirements. You must strive to get your message through clearly and accurately the first time – take your time and don’t rush (remember the station on the other end has to write the information down in their log).
3. A “tactical” callsign designates your location, function or both (i.e. “Tejon Shelter,” “Penrose Main,” “EOC,” “Red Cross,” etc.) The rule is “TACTICAL IN, CALLSIGN OUT” – use your tactical callsign to contact NCS so they immediately know your location/function and give your FCC callsign at the end of communication to indicate you are clear.

Example:

**Station calling:** *"Penrose Main" [Tactical In]*

**Net control:** *"Penrose Main Go"*

**Penrose Main:** *"I have a John Doe ready for pickup at the emergency room entrance. He needs to go to 2468 Austin Bluff Parkway. WØABC" [Callsign Out]*

**Net control:** *"Copy, WØNET"*

4. In a directed net, your first call is ALWAYS directed to the Net Control Station (NCS); therefore it is redundant and wasteful to say *"Net Control, this is Penrose Main."* Instead, simply say your tactical call sign, i.e., “Penrose Main,” and NCS should respond with “Penrose Main Go” (see example above).

5. If you have not yet been assigned a tactical call, use your callsign suffix (preferred) or full call sign as if it were a tactical call.

Example:

**Station calling:** "HBZ" (or "KØHBZ") [**Tactical In**]

**Net Control:** "HBZ Go" (or "KØHBZ Go")

**KØHBZ:** "Available for assignment."

**Net Control:** "Report to the Red Cross Shelter at Coronado High School, 1590 West Filmore, set up a portable station inside, assume tactical "Coronado Shelter" when operational."

**KØHBZ:** "Roger, ETA 20 minutes. KØHBZ" [**Callsign Out**]

**Net Control:** "WØNET"

6. To contact another station during a directed net, give your tactical call, WAIT for net control to acknowledge you, then call the other station direct and pass your traffic. If NCS has emergency or priority traffic pending on the frequency, or doesn't want you to use the frequency for whatever reason, NCS will ask you to "standby" or "wait."

Example:

**Station calling:** "Penrose Main" [**Tactical In**]

**Net Control:** "Penrose Main Go"

**Penrose Main:** "Mobile 1, Penrose Main"

**Mobile 1:** "Mobile 1"

**Penrose Main:** "I have a John Doe ready for pickup in the emergency room north entrance. He needs to go to 2468 Austin Bluff Parkway."

**Mobile 1:** "Copy, ETA 10 minutes. NØMOB" [**Callsign Out**]

**Penrose Main:** "WØABC"

*Note: The practice of calling another station direct after NCS acknowledges you is a relatively new technique. When working with other ARES or RACES groups, you may have to ask NCS for permission before going direct with another station on the net. When working with other groups, always listen (or ask NCS) for the appropriate protocol.*

7. When another station calls you, respond with YOUR tactical call sign only. This confirms that the calling station is, in fact, talking to the station they called.

Example:

**Penrose Main:** "Mobile 1, Penrose Main"

**Mobile 1:** "Mobile 1"

or

**Mobile 1:** "Penrose Main, Mobile 1"

**Penrose Main:** "Penrose Main"

8. Remember that repeaters take a moment to detect your signal and respond (usually about ½ second). Linked repeater systems take even longer (sometimes 1 to 2 seconds). If you key your microphone and speak immediately the repeater will miss the first part of what you say. Get in the habit of keying your microphone, waiting (say the word “WAIT” to yourself), then speak. If NCS says you are “clipping,” this means the first part of your transmission is being lost. After keying the microphone, always “WAIT” before you speak.
  9. Standard Phrases:
    - “Break” (by itself indicates Priority or Emergency traffic – all stations immediately stand by, let NCS handle)
    - “Clear” (finished transmitting)
    - “Direct” (as in "on direct" mean transmitting and receiving on repeater output)
    - “Go Direct” means call another station and talk with them one-on-one.
    - “Emergency Traffic Only” (used by Net Control to indicate an emergency exists on the frequency, all stations except those directly involved in the emergency should stand by)
    - “Over” (only used in noisy/hard to hear conditions, like on HF)
    - “Copy” – message copied
    - “Roger” – acknowledgement indicating message received & understood
    - “Say again” (repeat)
    - “Stand by” (means EXACTLY what it says!)
  10. Speak in a normal voice – do not shout – speak slowly and enunciate clearly, especially if your message needs to be written down at the receiving station.
  11. Use only standard ITU phonetics when phonetic spelling is necessary.
  12. Un-keying your microphone implies "over." Always leave 2-3 seconds between transmissions in case a station has to “Break” in with emergency or priority traffic. Failure to leave time between transmissions is referred to as “quick keying” the microphone. In addition, “quick keying” the microphone often results in a station clipping.
  13. Giving your call sign at the end implies you have completed your traffic and are clear (once in a great while, especially after a rare long communication, adding the word “clear” after your call sign may be appropriate).
  14. An emergency normally means an immediate or imminent threat to life or property. Emergency traffic ALWAYS has priority. Don’t use the word “EMERGENCY” unless it really is!!!
  15. If you have urgent, time sensitive traffic, but it isn’t an emergency, this is called “Priority Traffic.” Always advise NCS when you have either “emergency” or “priority” traffic (i.e., “Mobile One, emergency [*or priority*] traffic”)
  16. Identification: Under Part 97, FCC Rules & Regulations, you are required to identify using your legal call sign once every ten minutes AND at the END OF COMMUNICATION. Notice that you are not required to give your legal call sign at the beginning of communication. This is what makes tactical call signs legal – they’re at the beginning [TACTICAL IN, CALLSIGN OUT]. In emergency communications it is extremely rare that anyone should be conversing in excess of 10 minutes – but should that situation arise, you must ID with your callsign at least once every 10 minutes (watch a clock and ID on the even 10 minutes or ID each time you hear the repeater ID).
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