

The Four C's of Emergency Communications

The best advice for anyone performing emergency communications can be summarized by the four C's: Calm, Courteous, Correct and Concise.

CALM: Try to keep emotion out of your voice. No matter what the emergency, a calm, professional attitude will help keep things cool and get the message through more quickly and accurately. Losing your cool, calm attitude may cost an important message. The more reason you have for getting excited, the more important it is for you to remain calm. As an emergency communications volunteer you should set a good, calm example for the other people to follow.

COURTEOUS: You must think of yourself as a public servant. Regardless of provocation, remain courteous at all times. Never display temper on the air. Remember the "Golden Rule" at all times and practice it. Never fight with other operators over calls or reports. Always follow the instructions of the Net Control Station - whether you agree with those instructions or not. Most problems can wait until after the emergency situation is over. If some problem absolutely must be ironed out, do it by telephone or on another frequency - not on the net.

CORRECT: Work to keep errors out of your communications. Use the phonetic alphabet and repeat the message where appropriate to get names, locations, and other information accurately. Write everything down for reference. Remember, your role is communications - you are not in charge of anything - most Communications will be between the people who are in charge - when the Emergency Operations Center or Net Control Station asks a question, go get the answer from the person responsible, don't just give your best guess. It is always better to admit you don't know rather than give out information that is wrong. Always use plain language -- Don't use jargon or Q-signals, 10-codes, etc., which can be confusing.

CONCISE: Your job as an emergency communications volunteer is to get the message transferred while also allowing time for the other operators to get their messages transferred. Avoid tying up the net by keeping your transmissions as brief as possible. Always leave a few seconds between transmissions in case someone needs to break in with an emergency call. A strictly business attitude is your best technique for assuring time saving communications. You must consider the conditions - if everyone is full quieting, there is little need to spell words, but if conditions aren't good or the word is particularly difficult, then it makes sense to spell it. Don't rush - speaking a little bit slower often gets the message through faster because the other operator doesn't have to ask for repeats. Don't assume everyone

The Four C's of Emergency Communications

has a pad and pencil instantly ready when you need to send him or her, a long or

complex message - ask first, it saves time in the long run.