Radio Operations Quick Reference

Communication Best Practices

- Keep messages short and communications to a minimum
- Think before you speak, and be concise
- Listen to ensure the frequency is clear before transmitting
- Depress the PTT and then wait a second before speaking **(Push, pause, talk)**
- Speak slowly and clearly in short word groups to allow other operators to hear your transmission
- Use PROWORDS as appropriate
- Use plain language or "clear text", do not use jargon or code
- Listen for your tactical call and respond when called

Use of Clear Text

Under the National Incident Management System guidelines, all communication should be in plain English or "clear text". Agency specific codes, radio codes, or jargon should not be used. Clear text or plain English is simply using words to communicate your message.

Tactical Call Signs

During an event, drill, or actual emergency, radio users will be assigned a "Tactical Call Sign". Tactical call signs may be assigned to an individual position, such as "Comms 1", or a group working together such as "Team 1". Tactical call signs may also be issued to an area or place such as "Staging", or "Rush Shelter". It is critical that you know your assigned tactical call sign and the other tactical call signs used during an event, drill, or actual emergency.

Operating Protocol Using Tactical Call Signs

The protocol for initiating a contact is to transmit the tactical call sign of the individual, team or place you want to contact, followed by your tactical call sign **(who you are calling, who you are)**.

NVADG has established basic tactical call signs using Team #s as the tactical team call sign and "Animal Comms" or "Comms" for the communications unit.

- Example - Simple contact from Comms to Team 1 – *"Team1, THIS IS Animal Comms"*
- Example - Experienced Radio Operators will use *"Team1, Animal Comms"*

To answer a call, simply answer with your tactical call sign, or reverse the protocol.

- Example reply by Team 1 – *"Team 1",* or *"Animal Comms, Team 1",* or the long version *"Animal Comms, THIS IS Team 1"*

Once you have established contact you can continue with your message or "traffic". When contacting personnel on an incident, you should add "Animal Rescue" as a prefix to your team number so they have a better idea of who you are.

What to Report Over the Radio

- Radio Checks
- Change in location (leaving staging, arriving at a location, departing a location, new destination)
- Transporting animals to the shelter
- Requesting resources (medical, veterinary, environmental support)
- Reporting hazards, roadblocks, or closures or other safety issues
- Reporting changes in weather and fire behavior

Hierarchy of Communications

NVADG uses the following hierarchy of communication between teams in the field and Animal Comms:

1. NVADG Secure Frequencies
2. NVADG Analog Frequencies
3. Text Messaging: Personal cellphones
4. Voice Communication: Personal cellphones

Incident within an incident/Medical Emergency
Response and Actions

Your duty as a team leader or field communicator is to initiate all communication about team emergencies that occur during your assignment. These could be vehicle accidents, team member injuries, or other types of incidents that require immediate lifesaving actions. Maintain situational awareness so you can pick the fastest method to active an emergency response for your team.

1. The incident will often have line EMTs assigned to your division or will have EMTs available on the assigned crews or engines. Your closest source of help could be your Division Supervisor. Contact you Division Supervisor with "Emergency Traffic".

   ➢ Example: *"Division Alpha, Animal Rescue Team 1, Emergency Traffic"*
   ➢ Explain the nature of the emergency, and request the assistance needed.

2. Depending on where you are relative to the fire, your fastest option may be to call 911. Be prepared to provide location information, nature of the emergency, and the assistance requested.

3. In all cases, inform Animal Comms of your emergency situation. Provide Animal Comms the details of the emergency, and Comms will inform the Evac Lead of the situation.

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Comms Protocol for a
Missing Team in the Field

1. Animal Comms will be checking team status every 30 minutes (or 1 hour for some assignments) for updates if they have not reported in.

2. If a team does not respond, Animal Comms will try again in 5 minutes.

3. If not heard over the radio, Comms will try text and phone to contact the team lead.

4. If no reply, Comms will notify the Evac Lead, and will contact another team in the field and have them try to contact the "missing" team.

5. If no team is available, the Evac Lead will determine if assistance is required from the Sherriff's office or the Incident.