

Radio Relay International

Training Aid TR-005 – Using the ITU Phonetic Alphabet

Effective radiotelephone procedures require a thorough familiarity with the ITU phonetic alphabet. For example, within the English language there are many letters that sound similar when words are spelled. A phonetic alphabet eliminates this problem.

In time of emergency, the communicator may find himself transmitting unfamiliar surnames, complex chemical names, pharmacological terms, or other technical terminology. Such details cannot be left to chance.

An exercise:

One can easily prove that most emergency communications volunteers are unable to communicate difficult terminology effectively. For example; invite a radio amateur from outside your area to check into a weekly ARES® or similar EmComm net giving his call sign phonetically. For example:

“This is, Whiskey Bravo Eight Sierra India Whiskey, no traffic, over”

In many cases, it will take two or perhaps three tries for the NCS to understand the call sign correctly, unless, of course, he is an experienced traffic operator.

The above test can be repeated at various locations throughout North America and the results are nearly always the same. One will hear a net control expertly acknowledging check-ins with familiar call signs until the instant an unfamiliar call sign appears on the net, at which time everything grinds to a halt. Now, imagine that same net conveying important disaster information for a served agency? What would happen to net efficiency?

Proper knowledge and use of the phonetic alphabet is essential to emergency communications. Therefore, all EmComm organizations should drill using these procedures on a regular (weekly or bi-weekly) basis.

Instructions - RRI Training Aid:

All volunteers should have this training document available for each scheduled weekly or bi-weekly EmComm net.

The net control calls on each station in the net to pronounce and spell a word or phrase at random from the list. For example:

NCS: KD8ABC, OVER

QNS: THIS IS KD8ABC, OVER

NCS: PLEASE TRANSMIT GROUP NUMBER 13, OVER

QNS: *ALTIMETER*, I SPELL, ALPHA, LIMA, TANGO, INDIA, MIKE, ECHO, TANGO, ECHO, ROMEO, ALTIMETER, OVER

NCS: ROGER, OUT.

The NCS then moves on to the next net station.

Some groups include more than one word. For example:

NCS: NR8TU, OVER

QNS: THIS IS NR8TU, OVER

NCS: PLEASE TRANSMIT GROUP NUMBER 81, OVER

QNS: *METHYL*, I SPELL MIKE, ECHO, TANGO, HOTEL, YANKEE, LIMA, *ETHYL*, I SPELL ECHO TANGO HOTEL YANKEE, LIMA, *KETONE*, I SPELL KILO, ECHO, TANGO, OSCAR, NOVEMBER, ECHO, OVER

NCS: ROGER, OUT

Certain message content consists of figures, initials or mixed groups. For example:

- Group 101: “FIGURES 1015 DECIMAL 3”
- Group 132: “I SPELL MIKE LIMA ONE ZERO TWO GULF”
- Group 141: “I SPELL THREE ZERO ONE SIERRA TANGO, INITIALS BRAVO GULF”

One or two groups per net station is usually enough for weekly training purposes. If this exercise is repeated during two to four nets per month, all active emergency communicators should be well qualified to transmit complex words or phrases on behalf of served agencies.

This exercise can also be conducted at monthly or bimonthly EmComm meetings during which a net can be simulated in the classroom.

A. Technical Terms

1. Barometer
2. Anemometer
3. Psychrometer
4. Psychrometric
5. Millibars
6. Inches mercury
7. Cotton region
8. Insolation
9. Sling Psychrometer
10. Microbarograph
11. Hygrothermograph
12. Meteorograph
13. Altimeter
14. Kilowatt
15. Dipole
16. Vacuum tube
17. Integrated circuit
18. Hysteresis
19. Balun
20. Transformer
21. Inductor
22. Choke
23. Smoothing choke
24. Heterodyne
25. Superheterodyne
26. Neutrodyne
27. Regeneration
28. Oscillator
29. Terminal node control
30. 4CX5000
31. Diode
32. Tetrode
33. Capacitor
34. Frequency
35. Baud Rate
36. Spectrum analyzer
37. Impedance

B. Medical Terms

38. Cardiac
39. Myocardial
40. Dilated cardiomyopathy
41. Clostridal Myonecrosis
42. Gas gangrene

43. Sepsis
44. Staphylococcus
45. Aneurysm
46. Aorta
47. Vena cava
48. Penicillin
49. Erythromycin
50. Anterior
51. Lateral
52. Thoracic
53. Perineal
54. Pelvic
55. Abdominopelvic
56. Viscerocranium
57. Neurocranium
58. Blood pressure
59. Occipital Bone
60. Infectious
61. Petrotympenic fracture
62. Pharmacological
63. Bacteriological
64. Viral
65. Ilium
66. Ischium
67. Quarantine
68. Aeromedical

C. Chemical Terms

69. Methane
70. Methine
71. Propylene
72. Amyl acetate
73. Amyl nitrate
74. Amyl nitrite
75. Benzene
76. Dioxane
77. Dioxolane
78. Ethyl chloroacetate
79. Ethyl chloroformate
80. Ethyl methyl ketone
81. Methyl ethyl ketone
82. Isobutyl alcohol
83. Isobutyl acetate
84. Mercaptan
85. Methyl acetate
86. Methylamyl acetate

- 87. Napthalene
- 88. Phosphorus
- 89. Dimethylzinc
- 90. Lithium hydride
- 91. Calcium Chlorate
- 92. Calcium Chlorite
- 93. Hydrofluoric acid
- 94. Hypochlorite
- 95. Barium oxide
- 96. Zirconium

D. Figures

- 97. 48203
- 98. 62959
- 99. 00061
- 100. 29.84
- 101. 1015.3
- 102. 269 555 1212
- 103. 212 736 5000
- 104. 231-2121

E. LETTER GROUPS ("INITIALS")

- 105. FSTU
- 106. MCRD RTBN
- 107. FAA
- 108. FCC
- 109. SEC
- 110. AADC
- 111. ARSOF
- 112. BDOC
- 113. COMNAVFORJAPAN
- 114. USAF
- 115. EXORD
- 116. ESMRM
- 117. FFIR
- 118. RRCC

F. Mixed Groups

- 119. 316TH
- 120. 1015MB
- 121. W1AW
- 122. W6AM
- 123. N8ABC
- 124. MN2

- 125. RM1
- 126. 6L6GT
- 127. 1L5
- 128. 6SA7GT PENTAGRID CONVERTER
- 129. M166 HOWITZER
- 130. GRC109
- 131. PRC-64
- 132. ML102G
- 133. P38 CAN OPENER
- 134. M1911A1
- 135. PRC 1099A
- 136. PRC 320
- 137. R390A/URR
- 138. R388/URR
- 139. R274B/FRR
- 140. 15TH AF
- 141. 301ST BG
- 142. TR77A
- 143. J36

G. Names

- 144. Walters
- 145. Smith
- 146. Pickering
- 147. Marshall
- 148. Madison
- 149. Forsyth
- 150. Upshur
- 151. Calhoun
- 152. John Middleton Clayton
- 153. William Henry Seward
- 154. Walter Q Gersham
- 155. Stanislaw Wisniewski
- 156. Henryk Sienkiewicz
- 157. Tiefenbach
- 158. Archaya
- 159. Patel
- 160. Chandara
- 161. Tanaka
- 162. Yamamoto
- 163. Kobayashi
- 164. Choi
- 165. Jeong
- 166. Byrne
- 167. Sullivan

ITU Phonetic Alphabet

A	Alpha	AL FAH
B	Bravo	BRAH VOH
C	Charlie	CHAR LEE
D	Delta	DELL TAH
E	Echo	ECK OH
F	Foxtrot	FOKS TROT
G	Golf	GOLF
H	Hotel	HOH TELL
I	India	IN DEE AH
J	Juliett	JEW LEE ETT
K	Kilo	KEY LOH
L	Lima	LEE MAH
M	Mike	MIKE
N	November	NO VEM BER
O	Oscar	OSS CAR
P	Papa	PAH PAH
Q	Quebec	KEH BECK
R	Romeo	ROW ME OH
S	Sierra	SEE AIR RAH
T	Tango	TANG GO
U	Uniform	YOU NEE FORM
V	Victor	VIK TAH
W	Whiskey	WISS KEY
X	X-ray	ECKS RAY
Y	Yankee	YANG KEY
Z	Zulu	ZOO LOO

Procedural Phrases:

I SPELL Indicates word or mixed group to be spelled phonetically.

FIGURES Indicates group consisting only of numbers and special characters.

INITIALS Indicates group consisting only of letters, such as an acronym, abbreviation, etc.

Examples:

1. Walters, **I SPELL**, Whiskey, Alpha, Lima, Tango, Echo, Romeo, Sierra
2. **FIGURES**, 4 8 2 0 3. Note: If a number is **not** preceded by the proword **FIGURES**, it is assumed to be written out. For example, "twenty one" versus "FIGURES 2 1." Never "chunk" numbers
3. **INITIALS**, Mike, Charlie, Romeo, Delta, **INITIALS**, Romeo, Tango, Bravo, November.... [Transcribed: MCRD RTBN]
4. Avoid unnecessary phrases, which waste valuable circuit capacity, such as:
 - "Telephone with area code"
 - "Amateur Call" (Use "I SPELL" instead)
 - Preamble titles, such as "station of origin," "check," "place of origin," etc.

Remember! Brevity and economy of language preserve critical circuit capacity in time of emergency.