Radio Usage Summary

Radio Traffic (Messages)

➢ There are 5 key pieces of information in each message:
1. To
2. From
3. Date/time
4. Message [and Priority: urgent, normal, routine]
5. Location [this is the most-important!]

➢ When relaying information over the radio, read/speak slowly and clearly, and use the phonetic alphabet (see table). If you are reading a longer message, speak in groups of 5 words, pause, say "break" and listen for the receiving station to tell you to continue.

PHONETIC ALPHABET

A – Alpha	**J** – Juliet	**S** – Sierra
B – Bravo	**K** – Kilo	**T** – Tango
C – Charlie	**L** – Lima	**U** – Uniform
D – Delta	**M** – Mike	**V** – Victor
E – Echo	**N** – November	**W** – Whiskey
F – Foxtrot	**O** – Oscar	**X** – X-Ray
G – Golf	**P** – Papa	**Y** – Yankee
H – Hotel	**Q** – Quebec	**Z** – Zulu
I – India	**R** – Romeo	**/** – Stroke

Message Handling

(in priority order)
1. Life Safety
2. Property/Status
3. Health & Welfare
4. Routine

Information Prioritization

What First Responders need to know:

➢ Initial Damage Estimate (IDE)

➢ Transportation / egress: what roads are blocked

➢ Major hazards: potential to spread / where external resources are truly required

➢ Resources that you can share

What the EOC/ICC needs to know

Damage Estimate
- ❏ Transportation / egress: what roads are blocked
- ❏ Major hazards: potential to spread / where external resources are truly required: fires that can't be extinguished by CERT/neighborhood teams, *etc*.
- ❏ Disease surveillance + reporting

Call Signs

➢ Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinators should be identified as the name of their neighborhood, such as "Charleston Gardens" [or "Charleston Gardens NPC"]. Some larger neighborhoods will have multiple NPCs, e.g., "Barron Park (NPC) 3".

➢ Block Preparedness Coordinators within a neighborhood should be identified by their block number, *i.e.*, "27" or "Block-27". (You don't need to say "Charleston Gardens Block-27" since your assigned radio channel indicates that.)

➢ The order of call signs is: "[their call sign] (this is) [your call sign]". If you are calling Charleston Gardens and your call sign is Block-27, you would say: "Charleston Gardens from Block-27". Charleston Gardens would respond: "Block-27, Charleston Gardens. Go ahead."

Establishing Nets

In initial phase of disaster, Neighborhood Nets will usually be first on air. It is an ICS practice that the first unit on scene (or first station on the air) is to establish the net until relieved by a higher-level resource.

This means: If you are the first Communicator on the air on your given net/channel, you are "it" and must establish the net. For example, you a Block Preparedness Coordinator for block "Block-107". The steps are:

❑ turn on your radio

❑ make sure the volume is up to the proper level

❑ make sure you are on the proper frequency and tone

❑ know the tactical call sign you will use (if you are going to assume the NPC for Midtown, you are "Midtown")

❑ make the following announcement: "This is Block-107 starting the Midtown net. Stations checking in please come now for Midtown."

❑ Then, begin recording (and acknowledging) check-ins

❑ When your Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinator comes on the air, hand-off the net and provide (possibly via runner) your log sheets (so the new net control folks know who is where, and so forth)

Protocol and Codes

In a disaster, radio operators are supposed to use "plain English" - however, public communications dispatchers, *etc.* will likely revert to their training, so it's a good idea to know the 10 Codes, *etc.* DO NOT use Q-signals or ham radio jargon!

"Break": If you need to interrupt someone or break into a conversation, wait for a pause and say "break".

Typically, this is used only for priority (emergency) traffic, although you can use it if you just want to get a word in edgewise. On a ham radio repeater, it is also used to let the repeater "drop" the carrier and reset its transmission limit timer so that it doesn't "time out".

"Break" is also used when you have finished a message to one station and are immediately contacting another station or are pausing to get acknowledgement. For example: "This is Adobe Meadows NPC acknowledging the traffic from Block 12 - break – Block 35, do you copy?"