

"Good communication does not mean that you have to speak in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn't about slickness. **Simple and clear** go a long way."

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## Table of Contents

- Part I – Radio Infrastructure
- Part II – Rules of the Game
- Part III – Medical Control
- Part IV – Patient Communication
- Conclusion

## Radio Infrastructure

## Who's The Boss?

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates all radio and telephone communication in the US
- Management for both emergency services and for other users
- Only a limited amount of bandwidth is available; everyone has to share



## What Have You Done For Me Lately?

- Licensing base stations
- Establishing standards for radio equipment and limitations on transmitter power
- Monitoring radio traffic for violations (yeah, right)



## Fancy Terminology

- Simplex
  - Only one user can talk at a time
- Duplex
  - Two or more people can talk simultaneously

### Mobile Radios

- Typically installed in a vehicle or other permanent location
- Typically operate off fixed power, such as vehicle engine (no batteries needed)
- Typically are the highest-powered field radios (30-60 watts)
- Maximum range of 10-20 miles

### Portable Radios

- Also known as Handie-Talkies® or walkie-talkies
- Typically run on battery power, which needs to be recharged on a regular basis
- Maximum transmit power of 1-5 watts
- Limited transmit range
- Actual range in use determined by obstructions, interference

### Base Stations

- Are usually the most powerful radios in a system
- Generally installed at a fixed, permanent location with connection to high power supply
- Typically used by a central station, dispatch center, or headquarters
- Power levels of 100 watts or more
- Transmitter may actually be located at a remote location and connected by hotline

### Repeater

- A repeater is a special kind of base station that rebroadcasts signals
- Receives a low-power signal from a portable or mobile radio, then rebroadcasts the signal at a much higher power level
- Enables field radios to have a much greater transmission range
- Helps radio systems work in very large and/or very congested areas



### Rules of the Game

### Rules of the Game

- Listen before transmitting to ensure that nobody else is already talking
- Wait one second after pressing transmit button before talking
- Acknowledge transmissions promptly and clearly
- Avoid voicing emotion; don't yell or condescend





### Rules of the Game

Hold radio microphone three inches from your mouth. Don't "bury" it.



### Rules of the Game

Don't use useless codes or phrases.  
When in doubt, use plain English.



### Rules of the Game

- Use EMS frequencies for EMS matters – and nothing else
- Reduce background noise before transmitting
- Turn down other radios to avoid feedback
- Clarify letters and numbers to avoid confusion



### Rules of the Game

Organize your thoughts and plan your message before pressing the transmit (PTT) button.

Keep message brief and simple.



### Rules of the Game

Watch for "open" microphones. Your job could depend on it.

Don't use slang or profanity.

## Medical Control



### Medical Control

- Online Medical Control (OLMC) refers to a live communication between EMT and physician
- Offline Medical Control refers to written or pre-existing instructions to the EMT by the physician
- Notify Medical Control as early as possible in special or unusual circumstances



### Contacting Medical Control

- Radios and telephones facilitate contact between Medical Control and EMTs
- Consult with Medical Control to
  - Notify facility of incoming patient
  - Request advice or orders
  - Advise facility of special circumstances
- Plan your message before transmitting



### Contacting Medical Control

- The Medical Control physician will base his/her instructions on the report received from the EMT
- Never use codes or slang
- Read orders back (feedback loop) to ensure clarity
- Do not blindly follow orders that do not make sense; ask for clarification



### The Oral Report

- Patient's chief complaint, nature of illness, mechanism of injury
- Summary of information from radio report
- Any important medical history not mentioned earlier
- Patient's response to treatment
- Vital signs
- Any other helpful information

## Patient Communication



### Patients Require Patience

- Make and keep eye contact
- Use the patient's proper name
- Tell the truth
- Use language that the patient will understand
- Be careful of what you say to others about the patient
- Be aware of your body language
- Always speak slowly, clearly, and distinctly
- Act and speak in a calm, confident manner



### Patients Require Patients

- Ask lots of pertinent questions
- SAMPLE and OPQRST help extract information
- You must be able to find out what the patient needs – and tell that information to others
- You are a vital link between the patient and the rest of the health care team



### Geriatric Patients

- Determine the patient's functional age
- Do not assume that an older patient is senile or confused
- Allow patient ample time to respond
- Watch for confusion, anxiety, or impairment of senses
- Explain what is being done and why



### Pediatric Patients

- Children know what's going on
- Allow people or objects that provide comfort to remain close by
- Explain procedures truthfully
- Position yourself at the child's level



### Hearing-Impaired Patients

- Always assume that the patient has normal intelligence
- Ensure that a paper and pen are available
- Face the patient and speak slowly, clearly, and distinctly
- Never SHOUT at the patient
- Learn simple sign language phrases



### Vision-Impaired Patients

- Ask the patient if he/she can see at all
- Explain procedures as they are being performed
- If a guide dog is present, arrange for its care and or transport (if possible)



### Sprechen Sie Deutsches?

- Use short, simple questions and answers
- Point to specific parts of the body as you ask questions
- SHOUTING does not make you an interpreter
- Learn common words and phrases for the non-English languages spoken in your area