

Communicating with Other Hams

Contact Basics: Good Amateur Practices

Q-Signals

Q-signals are a system of radio shorthand as old as wireless and developed from even older telegraphy codes. Q-signals are a set of abbreviations for common information that save time and allow communication between operators who don't speak a common language. Modern ham radio uses them extensively. The table below lists the most common Q-signals used by hams. While Q-signals were developed for use by Morse operators, their use is common on phone, as well. You will often hear, "QRZed?" as someone asks "Who is calling me?" or "I'm getting a little QRM" from an operator receiving some interference or "Let's QSY to 146.55" as two operators change from a repeater frequency to a nearby simplex communications frequency.

Q-Signals

Abbr.	Questions
QRG	Your exact frequency (or that of _____) is _____ kHz. Will you tell me my exact frequency (or that of _____)?
QRL	I am busy (or I am busy with _____). Are you busy? Usually used to see if a frequency is busy.
QRM	Your transmission is being interfered with _____ (1. Nil; 2. Slightly; 3. Moderately; 4. Severely; 5. Extremely.) Is my transmission being interfered with?
QRN	I am troubled by static _____. (1 to 5 as under QRM.) Are you troubled by static?
QRO	Increase power. Shall I increase power?
QRP	Decrease power. Shall I decrease power?
QRQ	Send faster (_____ wpm). Shall I send faster?
QRS	Send more slowly (_____ wpm). Shall I send more slowly?
QRT	Stop sending. Shall I stop sending?
QRU	I have nothing for you. Have you anything for me?
QRV	I am ready. Are you ready?
QRX	I will call you again at _____ hours (on _____ kHz). When will you call me again? Minutes are usually implied rather than hours.
QRZ	You are being called by _____ (on _____ kHz). Who is calling me?
QSB	Your signals are fading. Are my signals fading?
QSK	I can hear you between signals; break in on my transmission. Can you hear me between your signals and if so can I break in on your transmission?
QSL	I am acknowledging receipt. Can you acknowledge receipt (of a message or transmission)?
QSO	I can communicate with _____ direct (or relay through _____). Can you communicate with _____ direct or by relay?
QSP	I will relay to _____. Will you relay to _____?
QST	General call preceding a message addressed to all amateurs and ARRL members. This is in effect "CQ ARRL."
QSX	I am listening to _____ on _____ kHz. Will you listen to _____ on _____ kHz?
QSY	Change to transmission on another frequency (or on _____ kHz). Shall I change to transmission on another frequency (or on _____ kHz)?
QTC	I have _____ messages for you (or for _____). How many messages have you to send?
QTH	My location is _____. What is your location?
QTR	The time is _____. What is the correct time?

ITU Phonetic Alphabet

Letter	Word	Pronunciation
A	Alfa	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	Juliet	JEW LEE ETT
K	Kilo	KEY LOH
L	Lima	LEE MAH
M	Mike	MIKE
N	November	NO VEM BER
O	Oscar	OSS CAH
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

Note: The **boldfaced** syllables are emphasized. The pronunciations shown in this table were designed for those who speak any of the international languages. The pronunciations given for "Oscar" and "Victor" may seem awkward to English-speaking people in the US.

NUMBER	PRECEDENCE	HX	STATION OF ORIGIN	CHECK	PLACE OF ORIGIN	TIME FILED	DATE
347	PRIORITY	E	K7ABT	ARL 14	BEAVERTON OR	0830	July 8
TO: ARES Coordinator Washington County EOC		Donald Smith 164 158TH Beaverton OR 97006					
TELEPHONE:		503-555-1212					
ARRIVED	BEAVERTON	EOC	0715	X	(5)		
ARL	NINE	2	ARL	ELEVEN	(10)		
KB7VHI	146.90	UNTIL	1030		(15)		
SIGNATURE: Alvin Carlson KB7VHI							

SAMPLE RADIOGRAM AND NTS QUICK REFERENCE

Formally read as:

Message number three four seven, priority, Echo, Kilo seven Alpha Bravo Tango, ARL one four, Beaverton OR, zero eight three zero local, July eight.

Initials Alpha Romeo Echo Sierra, coordinator, Washington County initials Echo Oscar Charlie, no phone, break for text.

Alternate: Donald Smith, figures one six four, mixed group one five eight Tango Hotel, Beaverton OR figures nine seven zero zero six, phone, Five zero three, five five five, one two one two, break for text.

Arrived, beaverton, initials Echo Oscar Charlie, figures zero seven one five, xray, ARL, nine, figures two, ARL, eleven, mixed group Kilo Bravo seven Victor Hotel India, figures one four six decimal nine zero, until, figures one zero three zero, break for signature.

Alvin Carlson, end of message.

Notes:

- Spell phonetically all difficult or unusual words.
- Do not use CW abbreviations or Q-signals.
- ARL numbers should be spelled out.
- Messages MUST have a signature.

Figures – The following word is a number [decimal number]. Telephone numbers are considered three words in text.

Initials – The following word is a series of letters.

Mixed Group – The following word is a combination of letters and numbers.

Precedence: (highest to lowest)

- If unsure about precedence, consult with Net Control.
- Welfare and Routine not typically used in EOC traffic.

Emergency – Message having life and death urgency transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare or government agencies. If in doubt do not use it.

Priority – Important message having a specific time limit. Official messages not covered in the Emergency precedence; Notification of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official.

Welfare – Message that is either a) an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area b) an advisory or reply from the disaster area that indicates that all is well.

Routine – Most traffic carries this designation.

Handling Instructions:

- HXA** – Collect landline delivery within miles (If no number, unlimited authorization).
- HXB** – Cancel message if not delivered within hours of filing time; inform originator.
- HXC** – Report the date and time the message was delivered to the originating station.
- HXD** – Each station that handles the message should report identity and TOD of delivery to next station.
- HXE** – Delivering station get reply from addressee, originate message back.
- HXF** – Hold delivery until (date).
- HXG** – Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If expense is require, cancel and inform originator.

Phonetic Alphabet:

LETTER	WORD	LETTER	WORD	LETTER	WORD
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	Xray
G	Golf	P	Papa	Y	Yankee
H	Hotel	Q	Quebec	Z	Zulu
I	India	R	Romeo		

Common pro-words used on Nets:

- Break** – Reading message: A separation between portions of a message. Interruption: Declare a need to use the frequency for an emergency. For a non-emergency interrupt using your call sign.
- Clear** – Done with a call.
- Monitoring** – Station is not involved in a conversation, but is monitoring the frequency.
- Over** – Simplex: My transmission is ended and I expect a response from you. Repeater: Not used on a repeater.
- Roger** – I have received all of your last transmission.
- Say Again** – Please repeat the last transmission.
- Securing** – Station is leaving the air.
- Words Twice** – While sending: Since communication is difficult, every phase in this message will be sent twice.

ARRL Numbered Radiograms

The letters **ARL** are inserted in the preamble in the check and in the text before spelled out numbers, which represent texts from this list. Note that some **ARL** texts include insertion of numerals. For additional information about traffic handling, consult "The ARRL Operating Manual," published by American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

Group One -- For Possible "Relief Emergency" Use

Emergency/priority messages originating from official sources must carry the signature of the originating official.

- ONE** -- Everyone safe here. Please don't worry.
- TWO** -- Coming home as soon as possible.
- THREE** -- Am in ____ hospital. Receiving excellent care and recovering fine.
- FOUR** -- Only slight property damage here. Do not be concerned about disaster reports.
- FIVE** -- Am moving to new location. Send no further mail or communication. Will inform you of new address when relocated.
- SIX** -- Will contact you as soon as possible.
- SEVEN** -- Please reply by Amateur Radio through the amateur delivering this message. This is a free public service.
- EIGHT** -- Need additional ____ mobile or portable equipment for immediate emergency use.
- NINE** -- Additional ____ radio operators needed to assist with emergency at this location.
- TEN** -- Please contact _____. Advise to standby and provide further emergency information, instructions or assistance.
- ELEVEN** -- Establish Amateur Radio emergency communications with ____ on ____ MHz.
- TWELVE** -- Anxious to hear from you. No word in some time. Please contact me as soon as possible.
- THIRTEEN** -- Medical emergency situation exits here.
- FOURTEEN** -- Situation here becoming critical. Losses and damage from ____ increasing.
- FIFTEEN** -- Please advise your condition and what help is needed.
- SIXTEEN** -- Property damage very severe in this area.
- SEVENTEEN** -- REACT communications services also available. Establish REACT communication with ____ on channel ____.
- EIGHTEEN** -- Please contact me as soon as possible at _____.
- NINETEEN** -- Request health and welfare report on ____ (State name, address and telephone number).
- TWENTY** -- Temporarily stranded. Will need some assistance. Please contact me at _____.
- TWENTY ONE** -- Search and Rescue assistance is needed by local authorities here. Advise availability.
- TWENTY TWO** -- Need accurate information on the extent and type of conditions now existing at your location. Please furnish this information and reply without delay.
- TWENTY THREE** -- Report at once the accessibility and best way to reach your location.
- TWENTY FOUR** -- Evacuation of residents from this area urgently needed. Advise plans for help.

TWENTY FIVE -- Furnish as soon as possible the weather conditions at your location.

TWENTY SIX -- Help and care for evacuation of sick and injured from this location needed at once.

Group Two -- Routine messages

- FORTY SIX** -- Greetings on your birthday and best wishes for many more to come.
- FORTY SEVEN** -- Reference your message number ____ to ____ delivered on ____ UTC.
- FIFTY** -- Greetings by Amateur Radio.
- FIFTY ONE** -- Greetings by Amateur Radio. This message is sent as a free public service by ham radio operators at _____. Am having a wonderful time.
- FIFTY TWO** -- Really enjoyed being with you. Looking forward to getting together again.
- FIFTY THREE** -- Received your _____. It's appreciated; many thanks.
- FIFTY FOUR** -- Many thanks for your good wishes.
- FIFTY FIVE** -- Good news is always welcome. Very delighted to hear about yours.
- FIFTY SIX** -- Congratulations on your _____, a most worthy and deserved achievement.
- FIFTY SEVEN** -- Wish we could be together.
- FIFTY EIGHT** -- Have a wonderful time. Let us know when you return.
- FIFTY NINE** -- Congratulations on the new arrival. Hope mother and child are well.
- * **SIXTY** -- Wishing you the best of everything on _____.
- SIXTY ONE** -- Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
- * **SIXTY TWO** -- Greetings and best wishes to you for a pleasant _____ holiday season.
- SIXTY THREE** -- Victory or defeat, our best wishes are with you. Hope you win.
- SIXTY FOUR** -- Arrived safely at _____.
- SIXTY FIVE** -- Arriving _____ on _____. Please arrange to meet me there.
- SIXTY SIX** -- DX QSLs are on hand for you at the _____ QSL Bureau. Send _____ self-addressed envelopes.
- SIXTY SEVEN** -- Your message number _____ undeliverable because of _____. Please advise.
- SIXTY EIGHT** -- Sorry to hear you are ill. Best wishes for a speedy recovery.
- SIXTY NINE** -- Welcome to the _____. We are glad to have you with us and hope you will enjoy the fun and fellowship of the organization.

* Can be used for all holidays.

ARL NUMBERS SHOULD BE SPELLED OUT AT ALL TIMES