NYC Emergency Management

NYC CERT
Inter-Borough Communication Network
Standard Operating Procedure
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**Introduction**

The NYC CERT (New York City Community Emergency Response Team) radio program was developed to enhance the safety, efficiency, and interoperability of NYC CERT in the performance of their important role as community liaison and support for the City’s first responders.

The NYCEM / CERT Radio Advisory Committee (RAC) was established to guide and assist with the implementation of procedures, protocols, training schedules, training, exercises, qualification requirements, and equipment standards that strengthen and maintain the CERT radio network. The following Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to facilitate and sustain network capability, efficiency, and effectiveness.
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CERT Network Structure

A citywide network needs to be

- Interoperable—able to communicate citywide, across boroughs and between teams.
- Reliable—able to function in every emergency.
- Scalable—suitable for use on small or large scale events.
- Portable—able to operate via standardized portable radio technologies, protocols, and frequencies.
- Resilient—able to perform despite damaged or lost infrastructure.
- Redundant—able to use alternate communication methods when primary systems fail.

NYC Emergency Management's CERT program has two types of radio networks approved for use by membership:

- 700 MHz radios (Motorola APX 4000)
- 450-480 MHz radios (Motorola CP200 or equivalent)

Required Approval

Approval for CERT member use of either of the above systems is contingent upon the following:

- Completion of the appropriate NYCEM training course
- Review and indorsement of the appropriate “Document of Responsibility” listed in the NYCEM / CERT Standard Operating Procedure (see Appendix A and B).
- Receipt of official designation by NYC Emergency Management as an approved member.
- Participation in scheduled NYC CERT roll–call drills. (ex. Appendix C)
**SPECIAL NOTE:** NYCEM retains the ownership of distributed radio equipment. Team members that have been issued the 700 MHz radio are mandated to participate in the regularly scheduled radio drills (and/or other various activities as may be designated by NYCEM). Failure to participate will result in the radio unit being recalled. Radios will not be redistributed to that CERT member’s team until NYCEM obtains a commitment that the team can and will participate in regularly scheduled drill events and other activities as established by NYC Emergency Management.

**The Radio Advisory Committee (RAC):**

The Radio Advisory Committee is made up of appointed CERT members and NYC Emergency Management staff members working together to assist with the management of the NYC CERT radio program. Membership in the RAC is voluntary and dependent upon status as being an *active* CERT member that has completed the required training, and is committed to the establishment and support of an effective citywide network that provides clear, efficient communication for NYC CERT.

**RAC Mission Statement**

The mission of the RAC is to establish and maintain a well-functioning, citywide communication network that provides and supports clear and efficient communications for all NYC CERT.

We will achieve our mission by implementing procedures, protocols, training, training schedules, exercises, qualification requirements, and equipment standards that strengthen and support the ability of NYC CERT to communicate and effectively respond.
700 MHz Radios

NYC Emergency Management issues radios that are programmed to work on the 700 MHz radio system, managed by the City of New York.

Available Channels:
The NYC CERT program has seven operations channels that are monitored by NYC Emergency Management’s Watch Command and other agency staff. (See Org. Chart 1)

- CW – CERT Citywide
- BX – Bronx Channel
- BK – Brooklyn Channel
- MN – Manhattan Channel
- QN – Queens Channel
- SI – Staten Island Channel
- CERT – TA (Talk About)

NOTE: NYC Emergency Management’s staff has multi-cast capability on the All Talk Group (ATG) channel and can broadcast to all channels at the same time.

Primary use:
- Communication between NYC Emergency Management staff (Watch Command, Emergency Operations Center, CERT Program Staff) and CERT leadership
- Communication between trained CERT team leadership (or their designee) for inter- and intra-borough communications

City-wide Capability for:
- Major incidents and emergencies affecting NYC.
- Inter-borough communication for urgent, emergency, or training purposes
- Non-emergency inter-borough events such as inter-borough bike tours and marathons

Local Use:
- Management of local incidents or events.
- Intra-borough team communication (Emergency incident or planned event.)

Features:
- Primary Purpose – Urgent and emergency communications
- One per team
- Users – Team Chiefs or designated trained radio operator or NYC Emergency Management staff.
- Network Control – NYC Emergency Management via Watch Command
Inter-Borough Communication: Use of the BX, BK, MN, QN, SI Channels

- Radio Advisory Committee (Data Collection, Advice, and Training)
- CERT Borough Managers (Administrative)
- Emergency Management Staff (Watch Command, EOC, CERT Program Staff)
- Network Control Operator (NCO) (Operations, Drills, Exercises, Radio Checks)
- CERT Member (Team Chiefs/Designees)
- Citywide Disaster Services (Providing Redundant Communication when approved)
Inter-Borough Communication: Use of the Citywide (CW) Channel

Radio Advisory Committee (Data Collection, Advice, and Training) -> Emergency Management Staff (Watch Command, EOC, CERT Program Staff) -> Citywide Disaster Services (Providing Redundant Communication when approved) -> CERT Team Chiefs/Designees/Borough Managers

Org. Chart 2
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NYC CERT Inter-Borough Communication Network
Standard Operating Procedure

450-480 MHz UHF Radio:

NYC Emergency Management maintains a cache of radios that operate in the 450-480 MHz frequency range. The CERT radios in this system are programmed to be used on channels licensed and managed by Citywide Disaster Services. (See Org. Chart 2)

These channels are the same throughout the NYC CERT program and provide interoperable communication between all participating teams.

Available Channels:
The NYC CERT program has been provided four channels for use by volunteers locally: CW-1, TAC-1, TAC-2, and a repeater channel. These channels are owned by Citywide Disaster Services and are monitored by their operations staff.

Primary Use:
- Situational awareness using the Citywide Emergency Communications and Information Network (CW-1)
- Local communication between CERT leadership and their team members
- Local communication among individual team members at designated events
- Intra-borough team communication at designated events
- Radio communication with non-CERT community emergency entities who are affiliated with Citywide Disaster Services

Secondary Use:
- Citywide or intra-borough urgent or emergency communication by CERT leadership only via CW-1
- Local communications range extension at approved events in coordination with Citywide Disaster Services
- For local team communication with its Community Disaster Network

NOTE: UHF radios can be used by CERT leadership as a redundant method of communication with NYC Emergency Management Watch Command by way of the CW-1 channel via Citywide Disaster Services. The Tactical Channels (TAC-1 & 2) are local and not able to transmit to NYC Emergency Management.
NYC CERT Inter-Borough Communication Network
Standard Operating Procedure

Features

- **Channel: CW-1 (Citywide 1)**
  - Radio – 450-480 MHz radio (Motorola CP200 or other frequency compatible radios)
  - Purpose – Urgent, emergency communications & information sharing
  - Users – Team Chiefs or designated NYC Emergency Management-trained team member(s)
  - Number of radios per team – Variable
  - Network Control – Citywide 1 Dispatcher

- **Channel: TAC 1 & 2**
  - Radio – 450-480 MHz UHF radio (Motorola CP200 or other frequency compatible radio)
  - Purpose – Local team communication (All CERTs to share the same Tactical (TAC) Channels)
  - Users – CERT members
  - Preferred number per team – One radio for every two active members
  - Network Control – Team designated (NYC Emergency Management-trained radio operator)

- **Channel: Local Repeater**
  Individual teams can submit an official request to Citywide Disaster Services for the deployment of their local repeater to the scene of an incident or planned event. If approved, Citywide Disaster Services will work with CERT members on the use of their repeater channel. (See Org. Chart 3)
  - Radio – 450-480 MHz UHF radio – Local Channel Repeater
  - Purpose – Extend the range of local communications during a specific event or incident
  - Users – CERT members and Citywide Disaster Services.
  - Number per incident or event – One
  - NCO – Incident Command of the event or incident
NYC CERT Inter-Borough Communication Network
Standard Operating Procedure

Local Communication between team chief and team members or from team member to team member using Tactical or Local Repeater Channels (Either CERT Lead or person in charge of the operation will determine the channel and necessity for a network control operator)
Other Communication Capability:
Teams may decide to establish communication capability with their local community using radio equipment (e.g., Ham radios, etc.) and/or resources that are outside of approved CERT networks. Management, repair, and/or liability for these resources or equipment are the responsibility of the individual team/member and not that of NYC Emergency Management.

- Local Team Communication with their Community Disaster Network:
  - Radio – Various Types
  - Channels – Determined by non-CERT radio channel users
  - Purpose – Local teams communicating with:
    - Businesses
    - Non-CERT organizations & institutions
    - Amateur radio operators
    - Etc.
  - Users – Team-designated
  - Number provided per Team – Team based
  - Network Control – Designated by channel licensee or representative
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

- The FCC is the overall authority for radio operation
- All radio transmissions must adhere to the rules and regulations of the FCC
- Serious fines of up to $20,000.00 and/or imprisonment of up to 5 years can result from a conviction.
- If the procedures provided in the NYCEM basic radio training course are followed, CERT members will remain within the boundaries of FCC regulations.

Section § 90.403 General operating requirements:

(a) Licensees of radio stations in the private land mobile radio services shall be directly responsible for the proper operation and use of each transmitter for which they are licensed. In this connection, licensees shall exercise such direction and control as is necessary to assure that all authorized facilities are employed:
   1. Only for permissible purposes;
   2. Only in a permissible manner; and
   3. Only by persons with authority to use and operate such equipment.

(b) In carrying out their responsibilities under § 90.403(a), licensees shall be bound by the provisions of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and by the rules and regulations of the Commission governing the radio service in which their facilities are licensed; and licensees may not, through written or oral agreements or otherwise, relieve themselves of any duty or obligation imposed upon them, by law, as licensees.

(c) Except for stations that have been granted exclusive channels under this part and that are classified as commercial mobile radio service providers pursuant to part 20 of this chapter, each licensee must restrict all transmissions to the minimum practical transmission time and must employ an efficient operating procedure designed to maximize the utilization of the spectrum.

(d) Communications involving the imminent safety-of-life or property are to be afforded priority by all licensees.

(e) Licensees shall take reasonable precautions to avoid causing harmful interference. This includes monitoring the transmitting frequency for communications in progress and such other measures as may be necessary to minimize the potential for causing interference.

(f) Stations licensed in this part shall not continuously radiate an unmodulated carrier except where required for tests as permitted in § 90.405, except where specifically permitted by this part, where specifically authorized in the station authorization, or on an as needed basis in the Radiolocation Radio Service.

(g) The radiations of the transmitter shall be suspended immediately upon detection or notification of a deviation from the technical requirements of the station authorization and until such deviation is corrected. For transmissions concerning the imminent safety-of-life or property, the transmissions shall be suspended as soon as the emergency is terminated.

NYC CERT Inter-Borough Communication Network
Standard Operating Procedure

NYC Emergency Management – Radio Distribution and Repair

Distribution

- Signed agreement is required from each CERT member at acceptance of a radio unit distributed by NYCEM (see Appendix A)
- Title (ownership) of distributed radios shall remain with NYC Emergency Management; however, individual CERTs are responsible for keeping the received radio unit in good working order.
- Once received, individual team members will be responsible for the safeguarding and daily maintenance of the issued radio.

Repair

The repair of malfunctioning radios will be the responsibility of NYC Emergency Management according to the following procedure:

- Malfunctioning radios should be first reported to your Borough Manager or designee with a request that the designated contacts within the RAC conduct a preliminary check/test (a scripted question set of use and operation).
- After a preliminary check/test has been completed, the RAC member will advise if the NYC Emergency Management CERT coordinating staff needs to be contacted.
- If the RAC has been able to resolve the problem, the radio will be returned to the team member. If the problem could not be resolved through simple methods, the malfunction will be brought to the attention of CERT program staff.
- CERT program staff will arrange a time for malfunctioning radios to be dropped off and will manage the repair and reissuing process.

SPECIAL NOTE: Immediately report a lost or stolen radio or components to your local precinct. Inform NYC CERT program staff of the report number.
NYC CERT Inter-Borough Communication Network
Standard Operating Procedure

For Personal or Team-Owned Radios:

- NYC Emergency Management is not responsible for upkeep or repair of personal- or team- owned radios.
- Radios purchased through grants for which NYC Emergency Management was the fiscal conduit are considered team owned radios.
- Malfunctioning Motorola CP200 radios can be reported to your Borough Manager or designee with a request that the RAC assist with conducting a preliminary check (simple operations question set).
- After a preliminary check has been completed, the RAC will provide advice as to whether or not the volunteer should refer to a repair shop for the unit’s repair. All repair costs for person or team-owned radios will be paid by the owner, not NYC Emergency Management.
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Appendices
Appendix A

Document to be signed by all volunteers receiving radio-training
Appendix A
Document to be signed by all volunteers receiving radio-training

NYCEM / CERT Radio Training Agreement

I, _____________________________, a member of the ___________ CERT TEAM, hereby acknowledge my agreement to uphold the terms and conditions of the New York City Emergency Management Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) standard operating procedures, Code of Conduct, and agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth below:

1. In order to participate in the NYC Emergency Management CERT Radio Program, each CERT member must successfully complete the NYC Emergency Management CERT training program.

2. Radios may only be used through the CERT Radio Network for the sole purpose of NYC Emergency Management approved CERT duties.

3. If the CERT team has procured radios for themselves, then they are responsible for maintaining them in good working order. Teams having existing radios may be able to have them programmed by CDS onto CDS’ FCC licensed frequencies at no charge.

4. Only radios that have been approved by NYC Emergency Management will be permitted to operate on City licensed frequencies.

5. CERT members will be responsible for adhering to all Federal Communication Commission standards and rules. Any and all violations and subsequent fines will be the responsibility of the individual CERT member.

6. Should a member misuse radios, NYC Emergency Management shall revoke the CERT member’s access to the NYC Emergency Management CERT radio networks. Any misuse of a radio will lead to forfeiture of the radios for that member and may lead to greater sanctions and/or subsequent removal from CERT program.

7. The CERT radio network will be monitored by NYC Emergency Management Watch Command to ensure that proper radio protocols are being followed.

8. It is the responsibility of the CERT team chiefs to ensure that members follow the procedures specified during the trainings and uphold the terms and conditions of the NYC CERT standard operating procedures when activating and utilizing the official communication(s).

9. If a radio is lost or stolen, CERT members must immediately file a report with their local NYPD precinct and provide police report number to NYC EM, Team Chief, and Borough Manager. If the radio is damaged, they should then notify their Team Chief, who upon such notification must inform the Borough Manager and CERT program staff.
Appendix A

Document to be signed by all volunteers receiving radio-training

10. Each party represents and warrants to the other that it has the full right and authority to enter into and perform this Agreement and is not a party to any agreement or understanding in conflict with this Agreement.

11. NYC Emergency Management reserves the right to withhold issuance of radios if it deems that the CERT member is not fully trained or capable of utilizing them properly. If the NYC Emergency Management exercises this right, the CERT member agrees and acknowledges that it will continue with their CERT activities within the New York City CERT program.

By signing and dating below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to all terms and conditions set forth above.

Name: _______________________  Team: ___________________________

Signature: ____________________  Date: ____________________________
Appendix B

Document to be signed by those receiving the 700 MHz System Radio
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Appendix B
Document to be signed by those receiving the 700 MHz System Radio

NYCEM / CERT 700 MHz Radio Agreement

I, _____________________________, hereby accept a radio, on behalf of the ____________ Team and acknowledge receipt of a New York City Emergency Management issued radio. By receiving this radio, I acknowledge my agreement to uphold the terms and conditions of the New York City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) standard operating procedures, Code of Conduct, and agree to comply with the terms and conditions set forth below:

1. NYC Emergency Management will distribute one (1) Motorola APX 4000 Radio with citywide, borough-wide, and point-to-point channels to one member of each CERT team.

2. NYC Emergency Management will release and distribute the radio to the above CERT for use by all trained members of their team in trainings, exercises, and activations.

3. NYC Emergency Management may at any time recall and require the return of the radios to ensure that they have been maintained in good working order.

4. Title of the radios shall remain with NYC Emergency Management. Individual CERT members shall be responsible for keeping these radios in good working order. Should radios require maintenance and calibration, CERT members must first notify their Borough Manager for a preliminary check/test. After the preliminary check/test, the Borough Manager will notify NYC Emergency Management CERT program staff and make arrangements for drop off/pick-up. Any neglect or misuse of radios will lead to forfeiture of radios, possible financial remuneration, and possible removal from the program.

5. Only radios that have been approved by NYC Emergency Management will be permitted to operate on City licensed frequencies.

6. Each party represents and warrants to the other that it has the full right and authority to enter into and perform this Agreement and is not a party to any agreement or understanding in conflict with this Agreement.

7. It is the understanding the above CERT will seek to have, at all times, several qualified radio trained CERT members who will rotate the use of the radio for the CERT team’s purpose.

8. NYC Emergency Management reserves the right to withhold issuance of radios if it deems that an individual CERT member is not fully trained or capable of utilizing the unit properly. If NYC Emergency Management exercises this right, the CERT agrees and acknowledges that they will continue with their CERT activities within the New York City CERT program, and seek to train another CERT team member on appropriate radio usage.

9. The CERT member acknowledges and agrees that the withholding of radios will not change the prior agreed to obligations between the CERT member and NYC Emergency Management under the NYC CERT Program.

By signing and dating below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to all terms and conditions set forth above.

Appendix B
Appendix B
Document to be signed by those receiving the 700 MHz System Radio

Name: _______________________  Team: ___________________________

Signature: ____________________  Date: ____________________________
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Appendix C

NYC CERT Inter-Borough Radio Roll–Call Procedure
Appendix C
NYC CERT Inter-Borough Radio Roll–Call Procedure

History
NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) desires to broaden and enhance the ability of NYC CERT teams to respond to emergencies, incidents, or events that occur in New York City regardless of Borough location. 700 MHz portable radios have been distributed to individuals that have received the NYC EM supplied radio training as a support to their team.

Bronx Borough CERTs initiated a regularly scheduled roll call to familiarize recipients with the 700 MHz unit. The intent of the roll call was to supply a method for building CERT member proficiency. The exercise was successful and the NYC Emergency Management staff, on recommendation from the Radio Advisory Committee, decided to expand it to all CERT that had received the 700 MHz radio.

The following is a description of the initial call format. As additional units are distributed to CERT, the described format, schedule, and level of complexity will be modified to satisfy augmented requirements.

PLEASE NOTE: As additional 700 MHz radio units are distributed to CERT members, the described format, schedule, and level of complexity of the weekly Radio Drill will be modified to satisfy expanded requirements.

NYC CERT Inter-Borough Radio Roll Call Procedure

Preamble:
Each Monday between 2000 (8:00 pm) and 2015 (8:15 pm) hours, the designated Network Control Operator (NCO) will call NYC Emergency Management Watch Command on the CERT City Wide (CW) channel of the 700 MHz unit for a radio check and to ensure operability between Network Control and Watch Command. The NCO will advise Watch Command that the NYC CERT Inter-Borough Roll Call will commence, as scheduled, at 2030 hours (8:30 pm) on the designated channel.

Roll Call

1. At 2030 hours, the Network Control Operator (NCO) will address all units:

   “All units this is Network Control. I am (give name, borough, team number, and position on team) calling from (name cross street location). The 2030 roll call will now begin. All units please respond when your team number is called. In your response, please supply the cross streets of your current location and describe the level and clarity of call reception.” (See Appendix E for common Terminology)
Appendix C
NYC CERT Inter-Borough Radio Roll–Call Procedure

2. The NCO will then call teams within the boroughs in numerical order starting with the Bronx-1 CERT team and proceeding in ascending order (lowest to highest) through all participating teams per borough:

The general call format will follow the following basic structure

- Net Control to Brooklyn Ten/Eleven, how do you read? Over.
- Brooklyn Ten/Eleven to Net Control, I read you loud and clear. How do you read me? Over.
- Net Control to Brooklyn Ten/Eleven, I read you loud and clear. Do you have any comments for the net? Over.
- Net Control this is Brooklyn Ten/Eleven. I have no comments for the net tonight. Over
-Or-
- Net Control this is Brooklyn Ten/Eleven. Brooklyn Ten/Eleven will be off air next week due to [explain necessity]. Over

- This is Net Control, roger that Brooklyn Ten/Eleven.

- Net Control to Brooklyn Fourteen. How do you read? Over

3. At the completion of the general roll call, the NCO will provide an opportunity for late coming teams to participate by stating:

“To ensure that all units attending this call have had an opportunity to respond, each borough will be recalled. Any team that joined the call late or is new to the roll call, please indicate your presence. State your team number, the cross-street location that you are calling from, and the level and clarity of call reception.”

Call order = By Borough / Ascending numerically
(Lowest to highest Team number) = X-2*
Bronx
Brooklyn
Manhattan
Queens
Staten Island
NYC Emergency Management program staff member(s)
Appendix C
NYC CERT Inter-Borough Radio Roll–Call Procedure

4. Upon conclusion of the call, the NCO will shut down by stating

   ❖ This is Network Control terminating the 2030 Drill call for [date]. Termination
time is [military time]. This is Network Control out.

5. After sign out, Network Control WILL switch to the CERT CW channel and advise
Watch Command that the 2030 inter-borough roll call has been completed and wait to
receive confirmation from Watch Command that the drill has been logged.

6. The NCO will complete the radio call log (see Appendix D) and submit that document to
the NYC CERT program via the cert@oem.nyc.gov mailbox.

SPECIAL NOTE: NYCEM retains the ultimate ownership of distributed radio equipment.
CERT members that have been issued the 700 MHz radio are mandated to participate in the
regularly scheduled radio drills (and/or other various activities as may be designated by
NYCEM). Failure to participate will result in the radio unit being recalled. Radios will not be
redistributed to that member’s team until NYCEM obtains a commitment that the team can and
will designate members that will participate in regularly scheduled drill events and other
activities as established by NYC Emergency Management.
Appendix D

Radio Roll–Call Log
# CERT INTER-BOROUGH RADIO ROLL CALL LOG

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** COMMENTS
### Appendix D
Radio Roll–Call Log

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## Appendix D
### Radio Roll–Call Log

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<td>NYCEM EXT AFFAIRS EMERG SUPPORT</td>
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### NOTES:
- **NET OPEN:** NCO to contact Watch Command (±20:15) on City-Wide (CW) Channel to announce the upcoming Roll Call and the Channel being used.
- **NET CLOSED:** NCO to contact Watch Command on City-Wide (CW) Channel to officially conclude Roll Call.
- **ROLL CALL LOG:** NCO will complete this Radio Call Log and submit to the NYC CERT program via the cert@oem.nyc.gov mailbox.
Appendix E

Common Terminology for CERT Radio Transmissions
# Appendix E

## Common Terminology for CERT Radio Transmissions

### Standard Phonetic Alphabet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
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<td>Bravo</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Kilo</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tango</td>
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<td>Charlie</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Lima</td>
<td>U</td>
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<td>Delta</td>
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<td>Mike</td>
<td>V</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>W</td>
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<td>Oscar</td>
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<td>Golf</td>
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<td>Papa</td>
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<td>Hotel</td>
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<td>Z</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Romeo</td>
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</table>
Appendix E
Common Terminology for CERT Radio Transmissions

Some simple terms:

“Code Red” – used during drills to indicate a real-life emergency

“Copy” means “Received, and understood”

“Affirmative”/”Negative” means “Yes”/“No”

“Say Again” means “Please Repeat”

“Loud and Clear” means The incoming signal is:

- Loud (volume)
- Clear (clarity of voice)

“Break, break for [unit name]” indicates that a station is requesting an opportunity to make a comment to the NCO or to the network in general.

“Over” means “I have finished speaking, and it is now your turn.”

“Out” means “I am finished and expect no reply”

“Urgent Message” – a message that takes precedence over all other transmissions

Note: (1) When a person is expecting a response from the person they are talking to, they end their transmission with "Over" (or "K"). If no response is expected or required it is not necessary to say either "Over" or "K"

Example:

Net-Control:
"How do you hear this unit?" "Over" (or “K”) [Expecting a response]

Unit in the field:
"I hear you loud and clear. How do you hear this unit?" "Over (or “K”) [Expecting a response]

Net-Control: "I hear you loud and clear. Thank You“ [Neither “Over” nor "K” is required because no response is expected]

Note: (2) "K" meaning "Over" is used by some governmental agencies and departments. It is added here only as reference information.