



NPIA

National Policing
Improvement Agency

AirwaveSpeak

User Guide

Version 1.0/2007

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FOREWORD

The Information contained within this file relates to the National Standards for Radio Communications, also known as Airwave Speak.

These standards have been accepted for national implementation by the Association of Chief Police Officers ACPO and ACPO(S) within a time frame of 2 to 3 years for completion.

The documents contained, produced by Prolingua under contract to the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), formerly the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO), are the User Guide and Training Manual.

The training presentation and support material is produced by the NPIA Airwave training staff in a format that may be delivered directly to the end user within the Police organisation or may be used as a template for delivery in a format to meet the needs of the individual organisation. (Please refer to the trainer recommendations for further information).

AirwaveSpeak was piloted by Northern Constabulary, West Midlands Police and the Central Motorway Policing Group. Any evaluated changes or relevant amendments following analysis of the pilot information have been made prior to publication of this documentation.

Thanks and acknowledgement go to the members of the pilot forces and working group for their time and effort they have given to assist Prolingua in development of these National Standards, to the Police Forces who allowed their staff to be involved on the working group, and to all others who have assisted, in whatever way, to the production of this material.

INTRODUCTION

This training pack is designed so that it can be used in its current format, or provided appropriate reference to the training recommendations section has been made, may be adapted to suit the needs of the organisation for delivery to the 'Digital Radio user'.

All information contained within the material remains the copyright of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and forms the Nationally agreed National Standards for Radio Communications as presented to and accepted by the Association of Chief Police Officers in (ACPO) and the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPO(S)).

All references to personal details such as Names and Addresses used as training examples, both in the NPIA and Prolingua documentation have been verified and are drawn from existing Police national training material that has been agreed and is already in circulation.

There is no intention to provide E learning material in the form of CBT or otherwise at this stage, described more fully in the trainer recommendations, as it is advised that the National Standards for Radio Communications should be viewed as a Business Change Process on a national basis rather than just a local training requirement.

The training pack is produced in the form of CD from which the working material can be drawn. It comprises several documents and files to assist trainers in their onward delivery of the information and their ability to easily make any alterations to recorded or written examples provided.

The Power Point presentation material has been derived from the Training Manual and User Guide within this pack written by Prolingua, following consultation with the volunteers from the working group, who are Police Officers and Communications Staff (including Police Federation and Unison representatives) from a number of Police Forces around the country.

BACKGROUND

Following work commissioned by Chief Constable Paul Scott Lee, of the West Midlands Police, in 2004, the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) took responsibility for the development of a nationally accredited and accepted standard of voice transmissions using the digital radio network.

Prolingua, a company comprising of Linguistic Experts, headed by Prof Ed Johnson, won the contract to work with PITO in devising the voice standards. Having had previous experience of working with the Police Service and many other large national organisations they identified the need to work with users rather than impose an external opinion.

Recordings or transcripts of Police radio use were requested by Prolingua in order to provide current evidence of the current standards. These were supplied voluntarily by various Police Forces.

Having enlisted volunteers from Police Forces around the country representing hand held and vehicle radio users, communications room staff (including representatives from Police Federation and Unison) a working group was formed.

The working group met regularly to discuss the voice recordings and transcripts gathered by Prolingua and following lengthy discussion and debate, with professional input, advice and guidance from the linguistic experts agreed on the keywords and phrases contained in the National Standards for Radio Communications.

A three month Pilot of the standards was carried out in three Police areas, namely, King's Heath Operational Command Unit of West Midlands Police, the Central Motorway Policing Group and the Shetland Isles of the Northern Constabulary. This provided information from three distinctly different areas of operational Policing and associated radio use.

Following successful completion of the Pilot phase the National Standards for Radio Communications were accepted in April 2007 for implementation within a 2 to 3 year time frame by ACPO IM Comms and by ACPO(S) for implementation in Scotland.

Due to demand from several operational Police areas, advance trainer workshops were run by NPIA (then PITO) Airwave training staff in March 2007 for all Police Forces, including those with national responsibility. Training material, some of which is included in this pack, has been provided for those forces wishing to forward plan for implementation at their earliest opportunity.

TRAINER RECOMMENDATIONS

General Issues

Due to the conclusions arrived at through the pilot and in feedback from the staff who undertook training for use of AirwaveSpeak it is recommended that forces adopt the National Standards for Radio Communications as a Business Change Process.

Forces may wish to enter into a marketing and publicity drive to push forward the business change process prior to commencement of training or to run alongside the implementation in order to heighten the awareness of all users about the positive effects that using AirwaveSpeak should bring.

During the pilot phase the training was conducted face to face with the users and this formed part of the evaluation. Users stated that this is the preferred method of training for AirwaveSpeak as it was fully explained and allowed for discussion on certain concerns over changes to operational working practice and procedures.

In line with that feedback and the business change process it is recommended that the training be conducted on a face to face basis until the current workforce are all correctly using the Standards.

From that time onward individual organisations may choose to adopt other suitable training methodology in order to train new members of the workforce.

Using the business change model in the manner recommended above will assist in lessening the amount of questions received during training and help reduce the overall time required for the face to face training input.

It is understood that in many cases these National Standards for Radio Communications are not far removed from the current training that is being delivered by forces in their student officer training programmes. It is expected that the training staff, using their current training methodology, can suitably adapt the information provided by the NPPIA with minimal disruption to their current programme.

Some forces training new staff, other than in the student officer programme, may need to consider their training programme in order that the voice standards are taught, along with the Airwave functionality of the hand held or vehicle radios, prior to operational use of the equipment.

There are key groups of operational personnel who will be essential to the speedy adoption and the effective use of AirwaveSpeak. It will come as no surprise that these are: Tutor Constables, Mentors of new Police Staff, Operational Supervisors, Control/Operations Room Staff involved in radio use, Control/Operations Room Supervisors,

Prior to training, the force, should put into place the required monitoring regime by instructing supervisors and the key personnel of their individual roles and responsibilities for monitoring and enforcement of AirwaveSpeak, supported by a senior command structure responsible for facilitating that enforcement. The Control/Operations Room staff should be encouraged to maintain the radio discipline of their talkgroup users and lead by example at all times.

Whilst the ACPO IMBA recommendation for implementation is an overriding factor, forces should consider that it is easier to monitor and enforce a standard that everyone is aware of and fully trained in. It therefore may be beneficial to the force if, once training commences, that the National Standards for Radio Communications are progressed quickly within the force in order to assist with their business change process.

Use of materials supplied

All the material supplied is available for use by the individual forces and some areas may be altered or changed to suit the particular local needs of the force.

*The areas that should **not** be changed in any way are;*

- The Keywords
- The Talkgroup Management Phrases
- Additions to the list of Keywords that contradict or mean the same as existing keywords
- The scripts for the Bad Example and the Good Example.

Items that can be altered or changed are;

- Call signs in individual presentation example voice recordings to give local recognition (be aware of implications of using actual call signs relating to members of staff who may be present in training environment)
- Voice recordings of presentation examples (other than the Bad and Good scripted recordings)
- PowerPoint screens for local information and force crest etc.
- Sample Knowledge check
- Prolingua trainers manual documentation can be used in part, such as knowledge check questions etc. for local training purpose.

LIST OF THE BASIC RADIO KEYWORDS

1. Acknowledge (So Far)
2. Backup
3. Call You Back
4. Code Zero
5. Go Ahead
6. Negative
7. Not Known
8. Nothing More
9. Out
10. Over
11. Please
12. Read Back (So Far)
13. Reading Back
14. Received
15. Repeat (or Say Again)
16. Repeating (or I Say Again)
17. Sorry
18. Standby
19. Thank You
20. That Is Correct
21. This Is (or From)
22. Urgent Call
23. Will Do
24. Yes, Yes

LIST OF THE 20 BASIC RADO PROTOCOLS

1. *Standard call up*
2. *Standard response*
3. *Delaying or insisting on a response*
4. *Terminating a call*
5. *Indicating receipt of a message*
6. *Requesting a Readback; Reading back*
7. *Confirming or correcting message content*
8. *Requesting a Repeat; Repeating information*
9. *Seeking acknowledgement*
10. *Seeking and providing clarification*
11. *Alphabetical and general numerical information*
12. *Units of measurement*
13. *Clock times and dates*
14. *Flagging items of information and the purpose of a message*
15. *Standard sequence: Persons and Vehicles*
16. *Affirming; Negating*
17. *Seeking emergency assistance*
18. *Talk Group phraseology*
19. *Communicating with other agencies*
20. *Special Operations*

GUIDANCE NOTES

1 *The keywords and protocols*

These are classified into three categories:

a) **The basic essentials**

These are mandatory. Each keyword is to be used in the form given, although there is some flexibility to include them in short phrases if that makes the communication more natural.

b) **Use as necessary**

These keywords and protocols are not normally required for routine communication between members of a talk group who are familiar with one another. They are to be used in circumstances in which there is a greater than normal need for rapid, clear, concise, and accurate communication (such as major incidents and emergencies), and in situations involving officers who are not usually in communication with one another (such as combined operations with other forces or agencies).

There is, however, no harm in using any items labelled “Use as necessary” even for routine communication.

c) **Recommended**

These keywords and protocols are not mandatory, but if used they will increase radio discipline and improve the efficiency and accuracy of communication.

Keywords are shown in bold throughout the Guide. Note that there are permissible alternatives for three of the keywords:

This Is (or From)

Repeat (or Say Again)

Repeating (or I Say Again)

2 *The terms “Exchange” and “Transmission”*

Exchange refers to a complete conversation of any length between two parties, from the initiating call to the close. An exchange is ended by **Out**.

Transmission refers to one speaker’s turn within an exchange. A transmission is ended by **Over**.

3 *Examples*

In the examples, O designates “Officer” or any other radio user and C designates “Control room staff”.

EXPRESSIONS OF POLITENESS

Politeness is dealt with first, not because it is the most important aspect of the standards, but because it permeates much of the language used over the radio, and the standard politeness keywords are used in conjunction with many of the other keywords.

It is natural, particularly for officers who work together regularly, to want to speak in a manner that doesn't sound too brusque, formal, or unfriendly. Consequently, a sort of informal politeness characterizes the vast majority of the language currently used over police radios.

This, however, can result in inefficient communication, because in everyday usage, politeness is expressed through wordy phrases, often with no particular meaning or purpose other than to sound less direct. For example, the bluntness of a command is softened by phrases such as "I wonder if you wouldn't mind ..."; thanking someone typically involves phrases like "Very good of you"; and apologies include expressions such as "I'm afraid I didn't ...". Phrases are sometimes even strung together, making the communication even more long-winded: "Sorry, my apologies, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to get you to ...". This sort of language, though typical of normal conversations, is the opposite of what is demanded by operational radio communication, which relies on accurate content, brevity, efficiency, and professionalism.

It is not mandatory to use politeness words at all, but where you feel more comfortable doing so, you must use one of the three standard terms:

Please

Sorry

Thank You

These terms are occasionally included for illustration in the examples given in the Guide. In every case, they could be omitted.

(**Please**) confirm no more units needed

I am not available (**Sorry**)

Received (Thank You)

*Notes:

1. Avoid all other politeness phrases.
2. Do not respond to **Thank you** (for example, by saying, "Don't mention it"), as this only prolongs the exchange by adding an extra transmission.

PART I

PART I: MAKING AND MAINTAINING CONTACT

1. Initiating an exchange (calling up)

This section shows how to make the initial contact with (call up) another officer or control room staff.

1.1 Calling up an individual

Basic essentials

The call sign¹ of the person you are calling (X 2) + Your call sign + **Over**

C: Sierra four-five, Sierra four-five from Mike Whisky **Over**

*Notes:

1. The purpose of the calling-up transmission is simply to establish contact. You should therefore keep this transmission to the bare minimum (do not, for example, include any part of your message in it). See also “Use as necessary”, point 3 below).
2. Do not continue the exchange until the person you are calling up has responded (see “Use as necessary” point 2 below).

Use as necessary

1. Introduce your own call-sign with **This Is (or From)**², particularly when communicating with officers from another force or agency:

C: Sierra four-five, Sierra four-five **This is** Mike Whisky **Over**

Separating your call-sign from the other person’s call-sign in this way makes it easier for other members of the talk group to identify who is calling whom.

2. If the exchange involves only you and the dispatcher/controller, once correct contact has been established, it is acceptable practice to leave out call-signs at the beginning of subsequent transmissions. In some circumstances, however, (e.g. where a large number of units are active on the same talk group, or where other forces or agencies are party to the exchange), it is advisable to continue to include call-signs throughout the exchange. If only one call sign is used in a subsequent transmission, it is to be your own call sign. For the sake of simplicity, call-signs are not included in some of the examples of non-initiating transmission given in the Guide.

(See also the comments on overlapping exchanges in section 5, page 15)

¹ “Call-sign” is used for brevity to cover all of the various forms of identification used by different forces, including collar number, rank + name, etc.

² Either term is acceptable. **This is** is more appropriate, as it refers unambiguously to the calling station. **From**, however, may continue to be used if it is the recommended form in your constabulary/force. (**From** would be better reserved for referring to or distinguishing third parties not directly conducting the exchange e.g. “Message from the Duty Inspector”.)

PART I

3. In some circumstances (e.g., when several operations are on-going), it is helpful to include an indicator of the message topic (underlined below):

The call sign of the person you are calling (X 2) (+ **This Is**) + Your call sign + brief message topic + **Over**

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky, (**This Is**) Sierra four-five, fire in Queen Street, **Over**

4. When hailing (calling up on a hailing talk group), follow the procedures for calling up in interagency communication: see Part VI, note 3 (page 38).

1.2 Addressing more than one individual

Basic essentials

List individual call-signs or use a general descriptive term in the initiating transmission:

C: Sierra one, Sierra four, Sierra five, Sierra one, Sierra four, Sierra five **This Is** Mike Whisky **Over**

C: Any patrols able to assist in the town centre, any patrols able to assist in the town centre, **This Is** Mike Whisky **Over**

1.3 Broadcast call to all talk group members

Basic essentials

All Units (or other designation) (X2) + **This is** + your call sign + **Standby** for observations/circulation/information³ + **Over**

C: All Units, All units (**This is**) Mike Whisky **Standby** for an observation message **Over**

Use as necessary

As in section 1.1 Use as necessary, point 3 above, include an indicator of the message topic in the initiating transmission.

³ Various versions of this phrase are used by different forces.

PART I

2. Responding to a calling-up

2.1 If you are free to talk

Basic essentials

The response transmission is identical to the initiating transmission (section 1.1 above):

C: Sierra four-five, Sierra four-five, (**This is**) Mike Whisky **Over**

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky, (**This is**) Sierra four-five **Over**

Recommended

To make it quite clear to the caller that you are waiting for the message, use **Go Ahead**

O: Mike Whisky, (This is) Sierra four-five Go Ahead Over

*Note:

Go Ahead is appropriate when the protocol for the calling-up transmission has been properly followed. Do not use **Go Ahead** if the caller has (mistakenly) included message content in the initiating transmission, as in the following example:

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky, Sierra four-five I'm driving towards High Street Should I wait for backup? **Over**

If you responded with **Go Ahead** to this transmission, it could be mistaken as an instruction to go ahead without waiting for backup. In such cases, respond by following the protocol given above, and then ask for the message to be restated, using a phrase such as "Transmit your message", or "Your message please":

C: Sierra four-five, Sierra four-five **This Is** Mike Whisky, Transmit your message **Over**

2.2 If you are NOT free to talk

Basic essentials

If you need a short pause before you can respond fully, use the keyword **Standby** (+ **unless urgent**). This keeps the exchange alive, and signals that there will be a brief pause before you resume the exchange.

C: Sierra four-two, (**This Is**) Mike Whisky **Standby (+ unless urgent) Over**

[Pause]

C: Sierra four-two, (**This Is**) Mike Whisky **Go Ahead Over**

PART I

If there is to be a longer time before you can continue the exchange, say **Call You Back** (unless urgent):⁴

C: Sierra four-two, Sierra four-two, **(This Is) Mike Whisky Over**

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky **(This Is) Sierra four-two, Call You Back Over**

Recommended

It is helpful to give a reason for a delay in continuing the exchange.

If you have a reasonably clear idea of how long that wait will be, give the listener an estimate (“in five minutes”, “after 1-5-3-0 hours”⁵, etc.):

C: Sierra four-two, Sierra four-two, **(This Is) Mike Whisky Over**

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky **(This Is) Sierra four-two, Call You Back** in five minutes **Over**

3 Responding to Call You Back

3.1 If your call is NOT urgent

Basic essentials

When you do not need to speak to the other person immediately, reply with

Received⁶ + Out

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky **(This Is) Sierra four-two Over**

C: Sierra four-two **(This Is) Mike Whisky, Call You Back** in five minutes **Over**

O: Mike Whisky, **Received Out**

⁴ Although the words “unless urgent” are not necessary, they are commonly used and may be used if preferred.

⁵ For the standard form of expressing times of the day, see Part III section 1.4 (page 26)

⁶ For the use of **Received**, see Part II, section 1 (page 16)

PART I

3.2 If your call IS urgent

Basic essentials

If you need to speak urgently to the other party, say **Urgent Call**. This indicates that the exchange must be continued without delay.

C: Sierra four-two (**This Is**) Mike Whisky, **Call You Back** in five minutes, **Over**

O: Mike Whisky, Sierra four-two, this is an **Urgent Call Over**

3.3 Responding to Urgent Call

Basic essentials

In response to **Urgent Call**, you must signal that the exchange can continue by saying

Go Ahead + Over

C: Sierra four-two, Sierra four-two, Mike Whisky **Call You Back** in five minutes **Over**

O: Mike Whisky (**This Is**) Sierra four-two, this is an **Urgent Call Over**

C: Sierra four-two **Go Ahead Over**

4 Terminating the exchange

Basic essentials

You indicate that the exchange is finished by **Out**.

C: Sierra four-two, Mike Whisky, I'm busy doing something else at the moment **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Received**. Can you **Call Us Back** at a convenient point in time
(**Please**) **Out**

PART I

Recommended

If you have said all that you need to say, but are uncertain that the other party is ready to terminate the exchange, you can “hand over” the option of terminating by saying

Nothing More + Over

If the other party has nothing more to add, he/she terminates the exchange with

Out

C: Sierra four-two, the **address**⁷ you asked for is 1-2-8⁸ Hilton Road Over

O: Mike Whisky **Received** 1-2-8 Hilton Road. **Nothing More Over**

C: Sierra four-two (**Thank You**) **Out**

5 Overlapping exchanges

Overlapping exchanges (involving more than one conversation overlapping in the same period of time) should be avoided where possible. Do not fail to terminate the exchange (with **Out**) simply because you may have something more to say at a later stage.

Overlapping exchanges are, however, sometimes necessary. In such cases, introduce all transmissions after the initiating one with **This Is +** your own call-sign. This helps to separate the exchanges from one another and enables all parties able to hear the exchange to recognize each speaker. It also reduces the need to ask for further confirmation of a speaker’s identity.

⁷ **Address** is used here as an “information marker”: see Part III section 2 (page 27)

⁸ 3 Numbers are given in single-digit delivery: see Part III section 1.2 (page 25)

PART II

PART II: CHECKING THE MESSAGE

Part I dealt with the keywords and protocols for establishing contact and terminating an exchange. Parts II and III are concerned with the body of the exchange.

One overriding aim of all radio practice is to ensure that messages are expressed clearly and unambiguously, and that they have been properly heard and understood.

Failure to do so is a major cause of poor radio discipline, as it can take several transmissions or repeated exchanges to clear up misunderstandings. This wastes officers' time, lessens operational efficiency, and in extreme cases can place officers in danger.

Part II describes the standards for checking that clear communication is maintained throughout an exchange. It is essential to follow these procedures in even the most routine communication: developing good communication habits in this way will help to reduce the likelihood that misunderstandings will arise in more pressured situations.

1. Indicating that a message has been received

Basic essentials

The keyword for indicating that you have heard a message is **Received**:

O: Mike Whisky, we're on the way. Will report back when we arrive **Over**

C: Sierra four-five, **Received (Thank you) Over**

*Notes:

1. A great variety of words and phrases have been in common use for this purpose, such as "copied", "thanks", "roger", "understood", "got all that" and many more. All of these must be avoided.
2. **Received** shows the other person only that you assume you have heard the message correctly; it does not guarantee that you have heard it correctly, or that you have understood it in the way that the other person intended.

PART II

Use as necessary

It is helpful to repeat the message, or a summary of it, as a check for both parties that it has been understood correctly.

C: Sierra four-five, he has a record of violence **Over**

O: Mike Whisky, **Received**, record of violence, **Over**

*Notes:

1. Always use the routine read-back procedure, as shown in 2.1 below, for specific details such as numbers and names. Mistakes in read-back are corrected using the procedure shown in 3.2 below.
2. If the information is particularly important, use the prompted read back procedure described in 2.2 – 3.3 below.

2 Reading back

2.1 Routine read-back

Basic essentials

A lot of messages include specific alpha-numeric information such as telephone numbers and vehicle registration numbers, which can easily be misheard. To avoid misunderstanding, always read back such items.

C: Sierra one-five (**from**) Mike Whisky, the **Telephone number**⁹ you require is 0-1, 2-3, 4, 5-9, 7-8, 6-0¹⁰ **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Received**, 0-1, 2-3, 4, 5-9, 7-8, 6-0 **Over**

*Note:

Because reading back indicates that you have heard the message, the keyword **Received** may be omitted when reading back.

Use as necessary

Repeat information of this sort using the phrase **I Say Again** (or **Repeating**):

C: Sierra one-five, the **Telephone number** you require is 0-1, 2-3, 4, 5-9, 7-8, 6-0, **I Say Again**, 0-1, 2-3, 4, 5-9, 7-8, 6-0, **Over**

⁹ Telephone number is used here as an “information marker”: see Part III section 2 (page 27).

¹⁰ Note that numbers are always given in single-digit delivery: see Part III section 1.2 (page 25).

PART II

2.2 Asking for acknowledgement or read-back

Basic essentials

Check that the other person is receiving by saying **Acknowledge**:

O: I'm going to check the alarm at the shop **Acknowledge Over**

If the message involves detailed information or information that is particularly important, say **Read Back**:

O: Mike Whisky, Could you put us on log number 5-8-2 of today's date, and I've a list of other officers to be put on to it. They're 3-8-4-2, 0-7-1-3, 9-8-6-5, 5-6-6-8, **Read Back Over**

Use as necessary

When a message involves a large amount of information, segment the information into chunks and after each chunk say **Acknowledge So Far Over** or (preferably) **Read back So Far Over**:

C: Sierra one-four, Mike Whisky, to get to the park you need to take the A4 and leave at the Padworth exit and then take the B6321, second exit off the roundabout.
(Please) Read back So far Over

C: Sierra one-four, Mike Whisky, do not use blue lights on approach to the park.
(Please) Acknowledge Over

*Note:

Use the full forms **Read Back So Far**, or **Acknowledge So Far** (and not **So Far** by itself).

PART II

2.3 Responding to Acknowledge or Read Back

Basic essentials

The response to **Acknowledge (So far)** is

Received (So Far)

The response to **Read back (So far)** is

Reading back (So Far) + The information exactly as given + Over

O: Mike Whisky **Reading back So far** take the A4 and leave at the Padworth exit and then take the B6321, second exit off the roundabout **Over**.

O: Mike Whisky **Received**. No blue lights **Over**

*Note:

Use the full forms **Reading Back So Far**, **Received So Far** (and not **So Far** by itself).

3 Indicating accuracy of understanding

The procedures outlined below are rather more detailed than common practice, but they must be followed. The extra few seconds taken in ensuring that information is accurately understood will result in a considerable saving of time and effort in the long run.

3.1 When a message has been read back correctly

Basic essentials

When the other person has given a correct read-back, respond with

That Is Correct

*Notes

1. **Received** is not the appropriate response to a correct read back.

2. Use the full form **That Is Correct** (and not **Correct** by itself).

C: Sierra one-four, Mike Whisky, the **Registered keepers** of the vehicles are John Anderson, Peter Greenbaum and Martin Jones **Read Back Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Reading Back** John Anderson, Peter Greenbaum and Martin Jones **Over**

C: Sierra one-four **That Is Correct Over**

PART II

3.2 When a message has NOT been read back correctly

Basic essentials

When the other person has given an incorrect read-back, respond with:

Negative + The information in its correct form

C: Sierra one-nine, Mike Whisky the **Registered keeper** is John Anderson
(Please) Read Back Over

O: Mike Whisky **Reading back** John Henderson Over

C: Sierra one-nine **Negative** John Anderson, Alpha November Delta Echo Romeo Sierra
Oscar November **Over**

Use as necessary

When only one item of information, among **several**, is incorrect, indicate the incorrect item by using the word **Correction**.

This term must be used carefully in the right context to prevent confusion or any ambiguity with the keyword **That Is Correct**. Clarity can be increased by avoiding passing information such as names in multiples:

C: The **Registered keepers** of the vehicles are John Anderson, Peter Greenbaum and Martin Jones **Read Back Over**

C: **Reading Back** John Anderson, Peter Greenbaum and Martin James **Over**

O: **Negative**. I have a **Correction** to one name only. Martin Jones, that's Juliet Oscar November Echo Sierra **Over**

*Note

1. You may also use **Correction** to correct yourself in a transmission:

C: The **Registered keeper** is John Henderson, **Correction**, John Anderson Over

PART II

3.3 Responding to a correction

Basic essentials

When the other person has corrected your read-back, respond with

Received + (Reading Back) + The corrected information

C: Sierra one-nine **Negative** John Anderson, Alpha November Delta Echo Romeo Sierra
Oscar November **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Received** John Anderson **Over**

C: Sierra one-nine **That Is Correct Over**

4 Repeating a message

4.1 Asking for a message (or part of a message) to be repeated

Basic essentials

If you did not hear a message or part of a message clearly, ask for it to be repeated by using:

Repeat (or **Say Again**)

C: Sierra two-seven, **(Please) Repeat** (or **Say Again**) the address **Over**

*Notes:

1. **Repeat** is preferred, but **Say Again**, which is in widespread usage, may continue to be used.
2. If you need only part of a message to be repeated, specify that part by using, as appropriate, specific information markers (see Part III, section 2, page 27) or a general marker such as **All before** or **All after**. (See examples in section 4.2 on page 22.)

PART II

4.2 Responding to Repeat (Say Again)

When asked to repeat a transmission or part of a transmission, introduce the repetition with

Repeating (or I Say Again)

C: Sierra two-seven, **(Please) Repeat (or Say Again)** the address **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Repeating (or I Say Again)** four-zero, forty, St Congan's Drive, unit number four **Over**

or

C: Sierra two-seven, Simon Twelis, last known address 2-7 Bosworth Street Wallasey **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Say Again (or Repeat) All after the Name Over**

C: Sierra two-seven **I Say Again (or Repeating)** last known address 2-7 Bosworth Street Wallasey **Over**

*Notes:

1. From time to time, even though you have heard a message clearly, you may require further confirmation, explanation, clarification, and so on. In such cases, avoid long winded expressions such as "I don't quite understand what that means", by using single-word requests (confirm/explain/clarify, etc.):

Please confirm you want me to call on Mr Twelis **Over**

Please explain/clarify the last message **Over**

The appropriate responses to a request for confirmation (etc.) are, **That Is Correct** or **Negative +** The correct information (see Part III section 4, page 32):

O: Mike Whisky, can you confirm Mrs Johnson will only be available after 2-0-0-0 hours **Over**

C: Sierra four-five **That Is Correct Over**

O: Mike Whisky, can you confirm Mrs Johnson will only be available after 2-0-0-0 hours **Over**

C: Sierra four-five, **Negative** that should be 2-1-0-0 hours **Over**

PART III

PART III: STANDARD EXPRESSIONS

1 Expressing commonly occurring information

1.1 Spelling

Basic essentials

All spelling and other alphabetical information is given using the “NATO” (also known as the “phonetic”) alphabet:

Alpha
Bravo
Charlie
Delta
Echo
Foxtrot
Golf
Hotel
India
Juliet
Kilo
Lima
Mike
November
Oscar
Papa
Quebec
Romeo
Sierra
Tango
Uniform
Victor
Whisky
X-Ray
Yankee
Zulu

1.2 Numerical information

Basic essentials

All numbers are expressed in single digits; 0 is “zero” (not “nought” or “oh”):

One-two (12)

One-two-five (125)

One-two-five-zero (1250)

*Note:

Avoid all other ways of giving numbers (such as “twelve fifty”; “one-two-fifty”; “one thousand two hundred and fifty”).

Recommended

In order to make it easier for the listener to understand a long string of digits (e.g., 13235705), they should be given in pairs, or in other natural groups:

one-three, two-three, five-seven, zero-five

Could you ring Mr Watson on **Mobile Number** zero-eight-eight-eight-one, four-seven-six, zero-zero-one **Over**

1.3 Units of measurement

Units of measurement refer to speed; distance, length and height; area; weight; and the like. Either imperial or metric units may be used.

Recommended

Include the units when giving measurements.

The driver was timed doing more than eight-zero miles per hour (or mph)

He is described as about six foot two inches tall

PART III

1.4 Time of day

Basic essentials

Clock time is always expressed in terms of the twenty-four hour clock. The numbers are delivered as single digits, and the unit of measurement “hours” is included:

Zero-nine-zero-zero hours (9 a.m.)

One-four-two-five hours (2:25 p.m.)

Approximately two-three-five-five hours (5 minutes to midnight)

1.5 Dates

Basic essentials

1. Dates are given in the sequence Day-Month (-Year) (dd-mm-yyyy)
2. The day is expressed in single digits, and the month may be given using single digits (“zero-five”) or the name (“May”).
3. Where it is included, the year is expressed in single digits:

Absconded (on) two-zero November, re-arrested (on) two-nine November

Date of birth One-Four Zero-Five One-Nine-Nine-Two (14th May 1992)

Date of birth One-Four May One-Nine-Nine-Two (14th May 1992)

Recommended

In certain types of messages (for example, when expressing several dates in the same year, or when the dates are very recent or in the near future), it is not necessary to give the date in full each time. Even when it seems clear to you, however, there is a danger that the listener may misinterpret the year or the month being referred to. Therefore:

1. If omitting the year, use a phrase such as “this year”; “last year”; “the same year”:
2. Always include the month. The month can be expressed as single digits, name, or an equivalent (such as “last month”), whichever seems most natural.

First reported missing on zero-four June this year.

First reported missing on zero-four zero-six this year.

Absconded (on) two-zero November, re-arrested (on) two-nine November the same year

She was charged at Neale Street on one-three of this month

PART III

2 Information “marking”

2.1 What is information marking?

“Marking” information is a simple procedure that can significantly increase the efficiency of communication. It helps both the speaker and the listener to focus on what is really important in a message. The marking word or phrase separates information of different types, which might otherwise be confused, for example, street names from personal names; model numbers from vehicle registration numbers; etc.

Basic essentials

1. Mark any item(s) of information that is (are) particularly important, or when stringing together different types or large amounts of information.

Mark an item of information with a word or phrase that indicates the type of information which is to follow. In the following sections, specific keywords are suggested as information markers. More important than the exact words, however, is the marking procedure itself. Virtually any common and appropriate word will serve, and they will tend to occur naturally once you have developed the habit of routinely marking information.

Markers have been shown in a number of examples in the preceding sections, indicated by bold italics. Further examples are:

Living at ***Address*** Sandford, Ferry Way, Glebe House

The ***Address*** is ***Number*** 1-5, Glebe House, Ferry Way ***Town Name*** Sandford

O: ***Please Say Again*** the ***House name*** Over

C: ***I say Again*** ***House name*** Glebe House Over

She lives at ***Flat Number*** ***2*** ***House number*** 2-7 Barrow Road, Cowley

2. As the first example above shows, marking can be used to introduce the whole string of information (such as the address). In certain circumstances, however, it may be necessary to mark only those parts that you may feel are likely to be confused or misheard (as in the second, third, and fourth examples above).

PART III

3. The types of information that occur most commonly, and which are therefore most likely to need to be marked, include:

dates

times (of day; duration, arrival, etc.)

addresses and telephone numbers

names (of persons, towns, roads, etc.)

locations

identification numbers (of vehicles, passports, bank accounts, etc.)

Examples of each of these are given in section 2.2 below.

2.2 Examples of marking different types of information

2.2.1 Dates

She was charged at Neale Street on **Date** One-Three May this year

2.2.2 Times

First reported missing at **Time** One-Five-Five-Zero this afternoon

2.2.3 Addresses

See above.

2.2.4 Numbers

These cover a wide range of types: telephone, registration, passport, National Insurance, bank accounts, and so on.

He can be contacted on **Area code** zero-one-two-two-four **Telephone number** two-seven, two-three, six-one.

The stolen card is for **Account number** one-seven, two-four, eight-nine, nine-nine, zero-three.

PART III

2.2.5 Spelling

The flat is let in the name of a Mr Twelis **Spelling** Tango Whisky Echo Lima India Sierra

2.2.6 Names

These include names of persons (**First / Given name; Middle name; Last name / Surname**); houses; streets/roads; towns/cities/villages/suburbs/estates; businesses; vehicles (**Make, Model**¹¹); buildings; churches; pubs; etc.

A burglar alarm has been reported at the premises of Business Name Anderson Partners

The missing person is **Last name** Dean **First name** Shirley

2.2.7 Location

In addition to the specific items such as **Pub name, Address**, etc., the general marker **Location** is useful:

A disturbance reported at **Location** The Broadway Arms in **Street name** Broadway

Recommended

1. Where information about location is involved (for example, when referring to an incident, reporting the progress of a pursuit, or requesting back-up), provide **Location** first.
2. Give location information in the order GENERAL TO SPECIFIC:

A disturbance reported at **Location** Sandford, High Street, **House number** 2-4

Location Route number A 92, **Distance** 3 miles north of the Ellon turn-off

Location Motorway M 25 between junctions 6 and 7

Location Smithwood Common, north-east corner

*Note:

This recommendation applies to operational locations, and not the transmission of standard addresses. The standard postal sequence is appropriate for these:

Registered keeper is Martin Jones, of **Address** 3 Meadow Lane Dunstable

¹¹ See also section 3.2 below.

PART III

2.2.8 Marking the function of a transmission

Recommended

In addition to marking information, if the function or purpose of your transmission¹² is particularly important or likely to be misunderstood, it is good practice to mark the function at the beginning of the transmission. For example:

Question: Is this the same person you arrested for possession of a firearm last week?

Warning: Be careful entering by the back gate as he is believed to have a large dog.

Instruction: Wait for the firearms team to arrive at the scene.

Information: The firearms team are expected at **Time:** one-six-zero-zero hours.

Request: Could you ask the Bronze Commander to contact Silver Control.

Marking functions in this way can avoid potentially serious ambiguity. For example:

From the duty inspector: can you treat it as a sudden death?

could be either a question (“Is it appropriate to treat it as a sudden death?”) or a request (“Please treat it as a sudden death”).

3 Sequencing information

Descriptions of many types form a part of many radio messages, and adopting a standard sequence for the various items within a description contributes to making communication more efficient. Sequencing serves several functions:

- It serves as a checklist that directs both the speaker’s and the listener’s attention to the key elements of information that need to be gathered and transmitted.
- It increases the predictability of the message, thus increasing comprehensibility.
- It provides ready-made markers for the individual items within the description.

There are national standard sequences for the two most common types of descriptions: persons and vehicles.

¹² For example, asking a question, giving an instruction, or making a request.

PART III

3.1 Person descriptions

Basic essentials

The order of items in a person description follows the NASCH sequence:

Name

Age

Sex

Colour

Height

Use as necessary

1. The NASCH sequence by itself indicates the nature of each item, but whenever the information is particularly important, or occurs within a long string of other information, mark each item (including the different parts of the name) within the sequence.
2. For greater clarity, where an element of the description is not known, mark that element using the keyword **Not Known**:

O: Mike Whisky, I require a persons check on **Last name** Dean **First name** Shirley **Age** **Not Known** **Sex** female **Colour** IC1¹³ **Height** five foot three inches

3.2 Vehicle descriptions

Basic essentials

The order of items in a vehicle description follows the CoMMuTeR sequence:

Colour

Make

Model

Type

Registration number

Use as necessary

1. As with the NASCH sequence, also mark each item of the CoMMuTeR sequence whenever the information is particularly important, or occurs within a long string of other information.

¹³ Use current Force Policy/National Standard as appropriate

PART III

2. As with the NASCH sequence, where an element of the description is not known, mark that element using the keyword **Not Known**.

Colour Red **Make** Volvo **Model** Not Known **Type** Estate Car **Registration number** Not Known

4 Affirming and negating (Saying ‘yes’ and ‘no’)

In everyday speech, there are many different ways of affirming and, to a lesser extent, negating. In order to ensure clarity and efficiency in radio usage, it is essential to limit the range of terms used.¹⁴

4.1 Affirming

Affirming is required for expressing four quite distinct meanings, which are often confused:

- a) to indicate that you have heard (and, by implication, understood) the message;
- b) to reply to a yes-or-no type question (e.g., “Are you on way?”);
- c) to confirm a statement made by the other person (e.g., “Did you say it was number two-seven?”);
- d) to indicate that you will comply with an instruction or a request for action.

These meanings are expressed by different standard keywords.

Basic essentials

- a) As described in Part II, section 1 (page 15), indicate that you have heard the message, by responding with

Received

C: The **House Name** is Farm Cottage **Over**

O: **Received ...**

b and c) To reply to a yes-or-no type question and to confirm a statement made by the other person

¹⁴ Pre-standardized police usage in this respect was almost entirely undisciplined: well over 60 versions of “yes” (such as “affirmative”, “roger”, “copy”, “OK”, “right”, and “aye”) have been recorded in operational communication.

PART III

These two meanings are not always easy to distinguish, and the National Standards provide two keywords which can be used interchangeably. Depending on the situation, one or the other of these may be more natural to use:

Yes, Yes

That Is Correct

C: Sierra one-five, are you able to turn out to the last incident? **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Yes, Yes** but I haven't been monitoring what's happening. Can you repeat the details (**Please**)? **Over**

C: Sierra one-two **Repeating** are you state two? **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **That Is Correct Over**

*Note:

1. The repetition of **Yes, Yes** helps to guard against the problem that "yes" by itself can easily be lost in rapid speech.
 2. **That Is Correct** is also the phrase for responding to a correct read-back (see Part II, section 3.1 (page 19)).
- d) Indicate that you will comply with an instruction or a request for action by responding with

Will do

C: Sierra one-four, can you attend the burglary in the High Street? **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Will do**. We should be there in five minutes **Over**

PART III

4.2 Negating

Negating is less common than affirming in operational usage. Nonetheless, it does occur, and is used to express the negative versions of the same four meanings outlined in section 4.1 above.

Basic essentials

a) Indicate that you have not clearly heard a message, or part of it, by responding with the keyword:

Say again (or Repeat)

(See Part II section 4 (page 21))

b and c) As with affirming, it is not always easy to distinguish between negative replies to a yes-or-no type question and to a request for confirmation. The keyword for both meanings is

Negative

(See also Part II, section 3.2 (page 20))

C: Sierra one-five, is the incident in East Street? **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Negative**. It's over on the Western Estate **Over**

C: Sierra two-seven (**Question**) Did you say you are dealing with the alarm at the industrial estate? **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Negative** I'll be busy at the hospital for another half hour or more **Over**

d) Indicate that you are unable to comply with an instruction or request for action by responding with:

Negative

C: Sierra one-two, reported assault in Victory Park, can you deal **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Negative** I'm on the Axford Road, I think my car has conked out **Over**

PART III

Recommended

As in the last example, it is natural (and also good practice) to provide an explanation for not complying with a request.

*Note:

Apart from response (a), indicating that you have not heard the message clearly, **Negative** is used for all forms of negating.

PART IV

PART IV: CALLING FOR ASSISTANCE

Basic essentials

There are two levels of urgency to be used in calling for assistance. These are expressed by the following keywords.

1. The higher level keyword is:

Code Zero

This is to be used only for those situations in which an officer, a colleague, or a person who the radio user has a duty of care to is under immediate threat of *serious injury or worse* or there is an escaped prisoner.

*Note:

The primary means of calling for urgent assistance is to activate the Emergency Button, and in certain circumstances it may not be possible, or advisable, to say anything. The phrase **Code Zero** is the speech equivalent of activating the Emergency Button and may be used, if necessary, in conjunction with taking that action. The phrase exists to be used wherever circumstances require it e.g. in a partial system failure or when an officer is forced to use an alternative means of communication. It may also be used, by others involved, to refer to an urgent call for assistance “We have a **Code Zero** from.....”, “Do a **Code Zero** now”

The keyword **Code Zero** is allied to the National Status Code numbering. It must be remembered that the essential information required when using the emergency button or the keyword **Code Zero** is LOCATION.

2. The lower level keyword is:

Backup

This is to be used to alert other talk group members that a potentially serious situation may be developing and that they may be required to provide assistance at short notice.

PART V

PART V: TALK GROUP PHRASEOLOGY

There are various activities associated with the talk group structure. At present, these are largely concerned with bringing together and separating talk groups, and with the joining and leaving of members. These actions should be announced to the members of the talk group(s) in the following manner **as necessary**.

Use as necessary

The following example expressions incorporate the terms which have become common since the advent of digital operational radio and the talk group structure. Their use is clear. Avoid therefore using alternative words such as “alter”, “turn”, “go over”, “I’m changing” (for **Switch**); “joining up”, “putting together” (for **Patch / Combine**); “carry on” “keep with” “don’t leave” (for **Stay On**).

Change of talk groups

Switch to talk group X

Switching to talk group X

If the controller instructs the user to change talk group:

C: Sierra one-five **This Is** Mike Whisky, (**Please**) **Switch** to talk group Bravo-one-Primary **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Received**. **Switching to** talk group Bravo-one-Primary **Over**

Requesting Change of talk group

Leaving talk group X

Joining talk group X

If the user requests to change talk group and joins another talk group:

O: Mike Whisky **This Is** Sierra two-four, do I have permission to change from talk group Alpha-one-Primary to talk group Bravo-one-Secondary **Over**

C1: Sierra two-four **Yes, Yes**, you have permission to change from talk group Alpha-one-Primary to talk group Bravo-one-Secondary **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Received** now **Joining** talk group Bravo-one-Secondary **Out**

O: Mike Whisky, Mike Whisky **This Is** Sierra two-four **Joining** talk group Bravo-one-Secondary **Over**

C2: Sierra two-four **From** Mike Whisky. I can confirm you have joined talkgroup Bravo-one-Secondary **Over**

PART V

*Note:

It is good practice to make contact on the talk group that has been joined in order to maintain user safety and efficient resource management.

Stay On talk group Y

Staying On talk group Y

If the user is denied permission to change talk group:

O: Mike Whisky **This Is** Sierra two-four, do I have permission to change from talk group Alpha-one-Primary to talk group Bravo-one-Secondary Over

C1: Sierra two-four **Negative, Stay On** talk group Alpha-one-Primary **Over**

O: Mike Whisky **Received Staying On** talk group Alpha-one-Primary **Over**

*Note:

As in Part III, Section 4.2 (Recommended) (Page 34) it is natural (and also good practice) to provide an explanation for not complying with a request.

Patching / Combining now talk groups X and Y

Talk groups X and Y now **Patched / Combined**

If the controller is going to **Patch / Combine** more than one talk group. This message must be broadcast to all talk groups involved:

C: All units, All units **This Is** Mike Whisky. **Patching (Combining)** now talk group Alpha-one-Primary with talk group Bravo-two-Secondary **Over**

C: All units **From** Mike Whisky, talk groups Alpha-one-Primary and Bravo-two-Secondary are now **Patched (Combined) Over**

*Note:

A pause between announcing the action and completing it will allow time for any unit to make representation that the action should not take place.

PART V

Separating now talk groups X and Y

Talk groups X and Y are now **separated**

When the controller separates the **Patched / Combined** talk groups. Again the message must be broadcast to all talk groups involved:

C: All units, All units **This Is** Mike Whisky. **Separating** now talk group Alpha-one-Primary and talk group Bravo-two-Secondary **Over**

C: All units **From** Mike Whisky, talk groups Alpha-one-Primary and Bravo-two-Secondary are now **Separated Over**

*Note:

A pause between announcing the action and completing it will allow time for any unit to make representation that the talk groups should not be separated.

PART VI

PART VI: COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Where more than one agency is involved in the response to an incident, difficulties can arise in communication between them. By following the guidelines in this section when communicating with other agencies, you will help to ensure that your communication is clear and efficient. Whilst this may sometimes make your transmissions and exchanges longer than they would otherwise be, remember that in inter-agency communication, *clarity is more important than brevity*.

Maintain strict communication discipline. Always use all of the procedures and keywords given in the preceding sections (including those marked “Use as necessary” and “Recommended”).

*Notes:

1. Even though other agencies may be using different procedures, keep strictly to Police National Standards in your own messages. Do not modify them to try to fit in with the other speaker(s). This will make it easier for them to understand you.
2. Make sure that you fully understand what the other person is saying before continuing the exchange or acting on his/her message.
3. Take care to announce clearly when you join or leave a talk group (see Part VIII).

When joining, identify initially yourself by:

Rank + Name + Force + Call sign (see note)

Kilo Whisky 2-3 Bomb Disposal Unit, Kilo Whisky 2-3 Bomb Disposal Unit,
This is PC Jones, Kent Police, **Call sign** Charlie Alpha 2-4

4. As stated, the protocol refers to the introductory stage in joining a multi-agency or multi-force talk group. Subsequent transmissions may include less information e.g. the given call sign may be sufficient to clearly identify the individual concerned. If however, there is likely to be confusion with the call sign of an existing talk group member, another form of address can be negotiated.

5. Give the name of your force in full, and not in abbreviated form (for example, “Greater Manchester Police”, not “GMP”; “Metropolitan Police”, not “the Met”).

It is good practice to include your force name every time you identify yourself, particularly if the talk group includes a number of participants from several services.

PART VI

6. It will often be important to give a location, and this should be done early in the exchange, and as clearly and concisely as possible. Ensure that you follow the guidelines concerning the use of markers given in Part III, section 2 (page 27).

7. The advice for constructing clear messages, given in Part VIII (page 43), is particularly relevant in inter-agency communication. Be careful to avoid using abbreviations (shortened words), acronyms (the initial letters of the words), and technical police terminology. Whilst these may be familiar to you, and their meanings seem very clear, they are likely to be unfamiliar to (or mean different things to) officers of other agencies.

PART VII

PART VII: SPECIAL OPERATIONS

The National Standards are designed for routine communication in day-to-day policing. Certain specialized, non-routine operations (such as surveillance and firearms) have their own codes of practice and special terminology. The national standards are designed to supplement and complement these special operational practices, and if used appropriately, there will be no conflict between the two. However, it is important not to use the terminology of special operations in routine communication: this can cause misunderstanding, as such terms may not be familiar to officers without specialized training.

The appropriate uses of the national standards and special operational languages are:

- 1) In communication in special operations: use the national standards whenever the specialized procedures and vocabulary do not state otherwise.
- 2) In routine communication: avoid, wherever possible, the procedures and vocabulary required for special operations.

PART VIII

PART VIII: COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICE

The National Standards presented in this guide cover those aspects of radio usage that are most important for ensuring that communication is clear, rapid and efficient.

In addition to the keywords and procedures given, there are some more general principles which it is impracticable to state in terms of specific rules, but which also have an important part to play in achieving best practice in operational communication. These principles relate to developing a professional attitude towards communication, and discipline in using your radio as a “tool of the trade”. What follows is a brief guide to how to construct your messages, and some practices to avoid.

Many of the relaxed and sociable habits of normal everyday conversation are out of place in operational communication. They can result in misunderstanding, waste time and endanger users’ safety.

Conciseness is a characteristic of best communication practice. It requires using sufficient words to make your meaning clear, and no more. This does not necessarily mean that the shortest possible transmission is the best in any given situation. At times being too brief may actually waste time in the long run: the other party may have to ask for clarification, which results in several repeat transmissions in order to make your meaning clear.

Adhering to the Standards in this guide will help you to achieve this. In addition, try to ensure that each transmission you make serves a single, easily recognized purpose: for example, by making a short, clear request, or giving a manageable amount of information per transmission. Be particularly careful about how you phrase questions. Make them simple and direct, for example:

- Is he known to have a weapon in the house?
- Was she observed entering the premises?
- Where was the vehicle headed?
- Did you get the witness’s name?

PART VIII

Avoid less direct or more complicated forms, such as:

- using a statement to act as a question: “So he’s known to have a weapon in the house?”
- making a statement and adding a question tag on the end: “She was observed entering the premises, yeah?”
- adding a suggested answer to the question: “Where was the vehicle headed: was it going towards the harbour, was it?”
- asking two questions at once: “Did you get the witness’s name, what was it?”
- using voice intonation alone to signal the purpose of a message “He was seen leaving the factory? (where, for example the word “factory”, spoken with a rising tone is the only indication that this is a question). “Was he seen leaving the factory?” is a more reliable construction.
- Composing messages with several functions. “Can you still see him? Well if you can be careful not to go too close yet as he’s got a history of assault. The Charlie Alpha vehicle will be with you shortly”

Informal language should be avoided. It is not always easy to keep good discipline when communicating with colleagues you work with and have come to know well. You will therefore need to guard against the temptation, when using the radio, to continue to speak in a casual, chatty manner—which may seem more natural—instead of maintaining an appropriately formal style. Joking and slang, whilst they may be appropriate in the locker room or cafeteria, are entirely unprofessional and out of place over the radio, and must be strictly avoided.

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