

How to be a Net Control Operator

Why do we have Amateur Radio

- Part 97 under the *Basis & Purpose of Amateur Radio*
 - “Recognition and enhancement of the values of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service. . . .”
 - “Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.”



How do we

Develop and Maintain our Communication Skills



I would suggest . . .

- . . . A great way to develop and maintain communication skills is to function as a net control station.

This is NOT difficult, It's rewarding!

- Volunteer club net control station
- Sunday Night net – easy place to start
- Let's take a short look at a net control operator in action



Let's take a short look at a net control operator in action



What does it take to be a net control station

- Not much, but a few items can make your experience easier



Radio


- Handy Talky (HT) OK but not recommended.
 - Does the job
 - Workout
 - Warm / Hot!
 - Battery go dead
 - Writing easier with handheld mic.



Better to use a Base or Mobile Radio


- Simple two-meter base radio.
- Has a better speaker easier to hear details
- Handheld microphone
- Multiple power levels
- External antenna





Brand & Type of radio. Really doesn't matter

- Good signal
- Can you hear everyone
- Don't need a super-station
- Most VHF nets the repeater is going to be doing all the work for you.
- If you hear repeater & can get a strong signal to it, you're great!



Next you'll need some instructions – a Script!

- Good nets are run from a script because they provide
 - Dependability to other stations
 - Assure that you don't miss a part
- Challenge for new net control operator, is not knowing what to say or do on the net.
 - The answer to this is easy -- just follow the script & all will be good

Sample Club Script

Yucaipa Valley Amateur Radio Club NET SCRIPT
(10/6/2020)

The Net Control station uses the following script to run the net.

=====Prior to net @ about 1950 hours=====

All stations on frequency be advised, the Yucaipa valley Amateur Radio Club net will commence at 2000 hours. This is CALL SIGN.

=====PREAMBLE (2000 hours) =====

Good evening everyone. This is FIRST NAME, CALL SIGN, net control for tonight's Yucaipa Valley Amateur Radio Club weekly net. This net meets weekly on Sunday evenings at 8pm on the AI6BX repeater. The purpose of this net is to promote club activity on the air, as well as a forum to share and discuss amateur radio and club topics and practice our radio skills.

Our website, YVARC.COM, provides information on the Yucaipa Valley Amateur Radio Club, including upcoming club presentations, and activities.

<RELEASE MIC / RESET REPEATER>

All stations authorized to operate on this frequency are welcome to participate in the net, with the emphasis on club-related topics.

This is a directed net. Unless otherwise directed, please pass all communication through net control, which is this station, CALL SIGN.

Before we begin, is there any priority or emergency traffic?

<RELEASE MIC / RESET REPEATER>

The discussion topic for tonight is _____. After check-ins everyone will have an opportunity to contribute their comments and questions about tonight's topic: _____

=====CHECK INS=====

This is CALL SIGN, net control for the YVARC Net. Standby for check-ins.

<RELEASE MIC / RESET REPEATER>

- I will now call the roll for member check-ins. After completing the roll, I will call for visitors and then late check-ins.

<GO THROUGH NET ROSTER FOR CHECK-INS>

- Are there any visitors who would like to check in, come now.
- Are there any late or missed check-ins, come now.

=====DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY=====

- Are there any announcements for this week for the net?
- As a reminder, tonight's topic is _____. Let's go around the net for comments and questions.

<Round robin of comments from checked in stations – call on each station>

<OTHER ACTIVITY?>

You need to Record Check-ins

- As stations check into the net you will record these check-ins
 - Steno notebook
 - Whatever works best for you
 - Notebook
 - Scrap of paper
 - ICS 309 form
 - Spreadsheet



The image shows a white form titled "ICS 309 Communications Log (ICS 309)". The form is tilted and contains a grid for recording communications. The grid has columns for "Time", "From", "To", "Message", and "Status". The form is partially filled with handwritten text, including "ICS 309" and "Communications Log (ICS 309)".



These are the basics

- Not much more to it.
 - Spare pens or pencils (they will fail at the wrong time eventually!)
 - Beverage -- water or whatever!
 - Whatever you more comfortable



A Few Other Tips!

Little things that may
work for you - use
what you want & add
whatever works for you



Have your supplies handy

- Pens
- Pencils
- Paper
- Important dates or other information

Have your supplies handy




What if I can't copy all the call signs!

- Experience operators makes it look easy
 - Don't be afraid to ask a station to repeat their call sign
 - After a few times it will get easier
 - Practice logging names and call signs when you're not net control station.
 - Maintain a list of call signs of people who regularly check in. A reference to look up a call that is partially garbled or hard to understand



Be ready to start on time!

- Ham operators are an impatient lot!
 - If you don't start within a minute of the scheduled time, you will hear a bunch of “kerchunking” as stations wonder if the repeater is working or not.



Welcome each check-in by name

- With practice you will know the names of all the regulars on your net.
 - Keep a browser window open on your computer open to QRZ so you can quickly look up an unknown call sign and come back to them with their name.
 - Not necessary but makes a more welcoming net



Use some type of timer

- Most repeaters have a “time out” timer
 - you don’t time-out the repeater
 - remember to announce your call sign at least every 10 minutes.



Relax!


- Even seasoned net control operators make an occasional goof!

Sources

Most of the information presented tonight came from a YouTube video, *Ham Radio Q & A* by Michael Martens, KB9VBR

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZbLbllwotE>





How to be a Net Control Operator Questions and Comments