

Instructions for all radio operators

- LISTEN. Most of the problems are caused by radio operators not listening to the radio.
- WATCH your microphone. If you can't see it, you are probably sitting on it.
- Once in position — blocker or checkpoint — NO vehicles are to enter the stage without the explicit permission of Control. That includes marshal and rally official vehicles, forestry, police, EMS, fire, even with lights & sirens.
- If you want to join the current conversation, or have more important traffic, use the following:
 - a. your callsign — if your traffic is relevant to the current conversation
 - b. “break” + your callsign — if your traffic is more important, but not an emergency
 - c. “Red flag” — for emergencies. Do not use “break break” or “break emergency”
- Bring your radio's manual. Bring spare equipment, if available.
- Lock your radio so it can't accidentally change frequency.
- Set the time-out timer on your radio to 1 or 2 minutes so you can't accidentally tie up the repeater forever.
- If it has been quiet for a while, check your radio. You may have accidentally changed a setting, or you might be sitting on your microphone tying up the repeater.
- Before transmitting, allow the repeater to drop, then wait at least one second. This will allow someone with priority traffic to get in.
- When transmitting, after pressing the PTT, wait at least a half-second, so everyone will hear what you have to say. Some radios have battery saver circuits, or people are cross-banding.
- Adjust your squelch. Many hams have the squelch turned up high in the city; turn it down.
- Watch your volume levels, these are easily bumped to near zero, even when the radio is locked.
- Know the “Red flag” procedure, and be prepared at all times to act on it.
- During an emergency, if you are not directly involved, please stay off the air and continue with your assigned tasks with the assumption that the rally could continue at any time.
- “Are you ready?” asks if all the staff at your entire position (checkpoint or blocker) are ready, not just you as radio operator.
- Always be aware of your surroundings so that you always know the status of your position and whether or not everyone is ready. FRS radio communication with the marshals at your location may help with this.
- Try to identify the vehicle or get the relevant details before picking up the microphone. In general, taking a few extra seconds at the start will save a lot of back and forth questioning.
- Be prepared to assume the duties of another position if requested by the radio organizer or Control.
- If you call in and Control does not acknowledge it, that means Control did not hear you. Call in again.
- Daytime running lights: if it gets cold and you want to start your vehicle's engine to warm up, if possible make sure the daytime running lights stay off. Often, putting on the parking brake before starting will do it.

Checkpoint radio operators

- You should be in position at least one hour before the expected start time, and start blocking the road immediately.
- Once you are in position, and the road is blocked, NO vehicles are to enter the stage without explicit permission from Control. This includes marshal vehicles and rally officials, zero cars and 98/99, forestry, police, EMS, fire, even with lights & sirens.
- When the marshals arrive at the checkpoint, it becomes their responsibility to block the road. Remind the station captain of this. If they don't do it, call radio Control.
- Park in the control zone in front of, or behind, the marshal vehicle. Yours is one of only 2 vehicles allowed in the control zone, and you must be there to be able to talk to the marshals easily, If in doubt ask the marshal where you should be parked.
- Record the numbers of all vehicles entering and leaving the stage. If unsure of a number, the marshal will know.
- Many marshals use FRS radios. Bring one if you have one, or if your radio can do out-of-band UHF. This will let you monitor the marshals, and talk to them directly without having to get out of the car.
- Arrange with the marshals a signal for "Red Flag, stop the cars" to be able to quickly signal them. Suggest combination of horn and headlights and waving stop sign. Depends on terrain and locations of people.
- Call in car numbers of all cars entering/leaving the stage at your location. This includes 000, 00, 0, 99, 98, Ambulance, etc., if they don't report in themselves.
- If you call in and Control does not acknowledge it, that means Control did not hear you. Call in again.

Blocker & spectator radio operators

- Park in such a location as to minimize the chance a rally car uses you or your vehicle as brakes, but try to block the road with your vehicle.
- Use enough pylons to block the non-rally road. Put some a ways up the blocked road so that a vehicle approaching from behind will realize something is up.
- The more pylons you use, the lower the chance of accidents, 8-12 is a reasonable number.
- Once you are in position, and the road is blocked, NO vehicles are to enter the stage without explicit permission from Control. This includes marshal vehicles and rally officials, zero cars and 98/99, forestry, police, EMS, fire, even with lights & sirens.
- Move the pylons, vehicle and/or barricades if needed as the stage direction changes.
- If you have a traffic safety vest (aka “hit me” vest), bring it and wear it. If you are supplied a “radio operator” jersey, wear that instead.
- Record the numbers and times of the rally traffic coming past your location, but do not radio them in except:
 - a. first and last rally car if requested by Control
 - b. missing car if very overdueThe times only have to be accurate to the nearest minute or two.
- If you call in and Control does not acknowledge it, that means Control did not hear you. Call in again.
- If a rally official vehicle is having trouble hitting the repeater, and you are close by, be prepared to relay for him/her by going to simplex or reverse. Especially important to help 98/99.
- Daytime running lights: think of the rally driver who comes around a corner and sees headlights pointing at him or her! If it gets cold and you want to start your vehicle’s engine to warm up, if possible make sure the daytime running lights stay off. Often, putting on the parking brake before starting will do it.

Mobile vehicle radio operators.

- Minimum equipment is a 50 watt mobile with a decent antenna (5/8 wave or equivalent).
- You must be able to put the radio in another vehicle. Do not assume the vehicle has a high-power power plug, be prepared to connect directly to the vehicle battery.
- Know where you are to rendezvous with the vehicle. Schedule 15-20 minutes for installing the radio.
- Ability to cross-band is strongly recommended, especially for Ambulance, Rescue, 98/99, Recovery, and Rallymaster. Those operators will regularly be out of the vehicle.
- Dress for the weather, you will be outside regularly, and may have to walk significant distances.
- If you have a traffic safety vest (aka “hit me” vest), bring it and wear it. If you are supplied a “Radio operator” jersey, wear that instead.
- Let Control know when you leave a checkpoint and where you are going.
- Let Control know when you arrive at a checkpoint.